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The Visva-Bharati Quarterly.

Vol. V, Part I, New Series

May 1939—July 1939

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SARASW

—By VANDANA
Sant.

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

May

New Series, Vol. V, Part I

1939 . .

TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DEAR loved one, all the waves of this wild sea,
This restless, eager and tumultuous heart,
Rise with a surge of joy to welcome thee,
And ebb in desolation when we part.

When thou art gone, their long-withdrawing roll
Sounds in each sheltered bay and distant strait,
Filling the sky with dirge from pole to pole,
And leaving half my life disconsolate.

But when thy name is called, or one dear word
Comes from thee, suddenly the waves leap high,
The myriad laughing waters all are stirred,
The floods lift up their voice exultantly.

Ah, friend, if thus the surface currents move,
Deep down, how still, flows the full tide of love.*

C. F. Andrews.

* This sonnet was written for Rabindranath Tagore's birthday nearly twenty years ago, but was revised by the author and given to the Poet, on his 78th Birthday this year.

PARISHODH

RETRIBUTION

By Rabindranath Tagore

[The following is a more or less literal translation in prose, by Kshitish Roy, of the original narrative poem written in September 1899. The poem has also been dramatised and set to music by the author and was recently staged in Calcutta under the title of *Shyama*.

The theme is the tragedy of love's passionate and blind egoism, which unscrupulously sacrifices every other happiness to its own, only to find that it has thereby lost its right to happiness. *Shyama*, the beautiful courtesan, is struck with the looks of *Bajrasen*, a handsome foreigner, who is innocently arrested and condemned to death. To possess him she saves his life by allowing one of her admirers to sacrifice himself in his place. The grateful foreigner easily turns *Shyama*'s lover, but when he comes to know of her inhuman conduct by which she procured his freedom, he is filled with disgust and shame and leaves her.

Love is not enough, nor is Desire a law unto itself ; for man is a moral being and may owe allegiance to standards of virtue and justice, independent of his desires. If the needs of love cannot be reconciled with his moral being, then his personality splits into two warring selves and, instead of happiness, love's satisfaction may bring frustration. That is what happens to the handsome foreigner who loves *Shyama* and is grateful to her for his life and yet cannot forgive her for violating the dignity of his inner moral self by purchasing his life with a crime. The moral law working through him brings the nemesis, the inevitable retribution, to the unfortunate heroine, so devoted to her lover, so guilty to humanity.

The theme is taken from an old Buddhist legend of Nepal,* where it is given as "the reason why Buddha abandoned his faithful wife *Yasodhara* Buddha was that *Vajrasena*, and *Shyama*, *Yasodhara*."—Editor.]

* See *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, by *Rajendralal Mitra*, p. 185.

“A THEFT in the King’s Treasury ! The thief or your head !” So ran the royal behest to the Captain of the guards. For fear of the royal threat guards scoured each street and searched every house for the thief.

Outside the city gate, in the crumbling ruins of a temple, they found Bajrasen, a Taxila merchant, who had come to Kashi to sell horses, and robbed of all his belongings by highwaymen, was trudging back home with a heavy heart. Taken for the thief and bound in iron shackles, he was being led to the prison by the Captain of the guards.

At that time Shyama, the beautiful courtesan, was sitting by a casement, amusing her idle hours with watching the passing scenes below. Suddenly she started and cried to her maids-in-waiting, “What a handsome man—a veritable rival of the king of gods ! Alas ! Why is he chained like a common criminal ? Go, my friends, to the Captain and beg him, in my name, to honour this place with his captive.”

A call from Shyama, the beautiful, sent a thrill of joy through the voluptuous heart of the Captain and forthwith he hurried to Shyama’s place with the captive behind him. Smiling the Captain said, “Why this sudden favour to this humble admirer of yours ? Allow me to hurry on the King’s service.” Suddenly raising his head, Bajrasen, his face flushed with indignant shame, asked, “What sport is this, fair maiden, adding insult to the injury of an innocent foreigner ? Was I led hither to be humiliated out of mere flippancy ?” “Alas !” replied Shyama, “No sport is this, strange wayfarer. On the contrary, so overwhelmed am I by your misfortune, that fain would I exchange these ornaments of mine for your chains. Your humiliation I feel as mine.” So saying, she seemed to wash away the stranger’s shame with her flowing tears. Then turning to the Captain she pleaded, “Take my all and set free this innocent man wrongly accused.” “So impossible a request,” answered the Captain, “I dare not entertain, O beautiful one. The King is furious and some one’s blood must appease his wrath.” Shyama took the

Captain's hands in her own and implored, "Allow the stranger two more nights at least."

"That shall be done," said the Captain, as he led his prisoner away.

On the second night the dungeon door was suddenly opened to let in a woman with a lighted torch in her hand. In a corner, heavily fettered Bajrasen was awaiting in prayerful silence the fateful morn to dawn. At the woman's glance, the guard removed the chains from the prisoner's limbs and the amazed foreigner saw before him the fair face of Shyama, delicate and luminous as a full-blown lotus. Profoundly moved, he cried, "Who are you, who have come like the goddess of dawn with the morning star in her hand, to dispel the nightmare of this dungeon? You who are come like the breath of life to one dying, how am I to know you—the one merciful goddess in this cruel town?"

"I, merciful!" A bitter, hysteric laughter broke from her, filling the cell with awe. Laughing and sobbing, she cried, "Not one stone in the dungeon is harder than this heart of mine." So saying, she took hold of his hand and led him out of the prison walls.

The dawn was breaking over the forest-top in the east, beyond the banks of the river Varuna. A boat was moored, and leading him on board, Shyama whispered, "Come, stranger from foreign land, let us sail on the same current, recking no bar. Let me accept you as the lord of my life." The boat was set adrift. From either side of the river came joyous notes of warbling birds. Claspng her face close to his breast, Bajrasen asked, "Tell me, what price did you pay to purchase my freedom? I want to hear it all, beloved, to know to what extent this miserable self is indebted to you." Nestling close Shyama murmured, "Let that alone now."

Backed by a lusty breeze, the boat sailed by swiftly on the hurrying current. Midday came. The village women had already gone back to their huts after their bath in drenched clothes, car-

rying holy water in brass pots. The market place was empty and silent, the pathways were deserted. Fastening the vessel to the worn-out steps under an ancient tree, the two made preparations for their bath and food. Above, the foliage was heavy with nests. The birds were without a twitter. The crickets lazily chirped away the long noonday.

A gust of warm wind, fragrant with the smell of ripe corn, fluttered away the veil from Shyama's face. Sudden passion inflamed Bajrasen's being and in a choked voice he poured broken words into Shyama's ears. "You brought me freedom, only to make me a slave for ever. I owe you my life, and with my life shall I repay this debt,—only tell me how you procured my freedom." Replacing the veil, Shyama murmured, "Let that alone now."

Silently were the golden sails furled, and as the boat of light glided down to the haven below the western mount, the lovers's boat was wafted by the evening breeze to a wooded bank. The crescent moon was dying ; a dim glow glimmered aslant upon the smooth surface of the water. The twilight shadows quivered with the song of the crickets, like the strings of a lyre.

Shyama put out the lamp and sat leaning on the shoulder of her companion, while the southern wind mingled with her hot breath. Like a mysterious magic web, the scented mass of her black wavy hair covered his chest. Shyama whispered, "What I did for you, my love, was difficult indeed, but far more difficult is my avowing of it. The few words I shall speak, forget them as soon as you have heard them. Uttiya, a mere youth pining in a hopeless love for me, took upon himself your punishment to oblige me. This, the worst crime of my life, I have committed for your sake, and let that be my glory, O you best of men."

The dying moon had disappeared. The forest trees stood mute with the slumber of countless birds. Slowly the arm encircling Shyama's waist was withdrawn, and relentless separation yawned between the erstwhile lovers. Like a statue of stone Bajrasen

śat motionless. Shyama threw herself at his feet and lay there like a creeper* torn asunder. Darkness deepened over the inky surface of the river. Suddenly clasping Bajrasen's knees with all her strength, Shyama cried in hoarse, tearless sobs, "Forgive me, beloved. Let providence heap the cruellest retribution upon this cursed guilt of mine ! But you must forgive what I did for you." Shaking his feet free and gazing fixedly at Shyama, Bajrasen said, "What need had you to save this life of mine ? Forever is my breath polluted with the memory that it was purchased with your crime. Dishonourable woman, cursed be this life that is indebted to your shame."

So saying he broke away and disappeared into the darkness of the deep forest, startling at each step the bed of dry leaves. The heavy scent of foliage hung upon the motionless wind. In the encircling gloom the hordes of branches assumed grotesque and ghostly forms. The dense forest with its chain of creepers stretched its hands in a silent prohibition. The worn-out traveller sank on the ground wearily.

A spectral form stood by him like a shadow. Silently she had hung upon his footsteps through the long and arduous path in darkness, her delicate feet covered with blood. Shaking his fist, Bajrasen roared in anger, "Will you not leave me alone ?" Quick as lightning the woman clung to him, his body enveloped and flooded over, as with a torrent, by her embraces, her sweeping hair, her burning kisses and sighs. Speechless with emotion she could only murmur, "Never will I leave you. For you I have sinned and from you must I receive my final retribution or recompense."

What blind intuition of an impending horror made the dumb trees in that starless gloom shiver in awe ! A last mournful appeal before the woman's voice was smothered, and with a dull thud a form rolled over the ground.

As the first glimmer of dawn gilded the tridents on the temple top by the holy river, Bajrasen wended his way back from the forest. In glass-eyed madness he spent the livelong day

wandering aimlessly on the lonely bank. The midday sun lashed him with its fiery thongs. Peasant women returning home with their pitchers were touched by his desolate look and called to him in tender tones, "Who are you, O homeless one? Welcome to our abode!" No response came from him. His throat was parched with thirst but he touched not a drop from the nearby river.

After the day was done, his body burning with fever, Bajrasen hurried towards the boat that lay moored where the lovers had left it, even as the moth hurries to the flame. His glance caught an anklet lying on the board. He hugged it to his breast, its jingles cutting into his heart like a hundred barbed arrows. On one side lay her blue dress thrown in a heap. He hid his face into its folds, hungrily breathing in the lingering aroma of her delicate limbs.

When the setting moon flickered through the branches of the seven-leaved tree, Bajrasen stretched forth both his arms towards the dark forest and called, "Come back to me, my beloved."

On the sandy bank appeared a shadowy form like a ghost among the ghostly trees. "Come back to me, beloved!" cried Bajrasen. "Here I am, my lord!" So saying Shyama flung herself at his feet. "Forgive me, for your pitying hands, alas, could not stifle my stubborn breath." For an instant Bajrasen gazed at her face and made as if to gather up her prostrate form in his arms, but a shiver woke him from his trance and pushing her away he thundered, "Why did you come back?" He flung aside the anklet and kicked at the blue garment as if it were a heap of burning embers. He closed both his eyes and turning his face the other way cried, "Away, away! Leave me alone." Shyama stood still for a while with bowed head, and then kneeling, bent her forehead in obeisance. Descending from the bank she slowly walked away into the darkness of the forest. Like an unearthly dream that disturbs one's repose for a while, she vanished into the blackness of the night.

INTERPRETATION OF MEANING

Dr. A. Aronson.

THE teacher of literature has constantly to ask himself the following questions : what do we know about the artistic experience of the writer ? what impulse drove him to put down his emotions or thoughts in the form of a poem, a novel, or a play ? what does this word or that *mean* ? is it a *definite* expression of his mental and emotional state, or only a vague stimulus for the reader's own emotions and thoughts ? is this meaning identical with the original experience or only a memory, a reflection of some psychic image in the poet's brain ? and if, finally, this or that word signifies something, how can this significance be communicated, translated into our own language and modes of speech ?

Most of the recent books on the meaning of the artistic experience do not reckon with the second problem ; they attempt a metaphysical investigation into the depths of artistic creation, the creative process itself. The reader is inclined to lose himself in the various theories on the origin of art, on intuition as the life-giving force of all creation, on the synthesis of intellect and emotion in all works of art, and on the collaboration of body and mind in creative activity. All text-books on philosophy and aesthetics abound in such vague abstractions ; instead of guiding the student towards an intelligent understanding of the function, scope, and limits of the creative process, they are contented with a shallow kind of metaphysical mystification :

"Aesthetics investigates the *meaning* of aesthetic pleasure ; the objective or subjective character of beauty, and the nature of beauty itself, and the origin and nature of the art impulse. . . .Literature. . . (is) a *refuge* for the soul wearied with the daily cares of *business* or *politics* or *professional duties*." 1 •

1. G. T. W. Patrick : *Introduction to Philosophy*. London, n. d. , chap. XXIX, p. 46sq. (The italics in this and all the following quotations are mine.)

A more scientific analysis of the art-impulse than those attempted in text-books will, however, not bring us any nearer to a solution of the problem of Meaning :

"Some actual experience which made a strong impression on the writer had *stirred up a memory* of an earlier experience, generally belonging to childhood, which then arouses a wish that finds *fulfilment* in the work in question, and in which elements of the recent event and the old memory should be discernible."¹

Perhaps, if we knew all about the "memory of an earlier experience" the meaning of the work in question would become intelligible, and not only of a whole poem, but of each and every word used by the poet in "fulfilling his wish" ; and even would we subject every poet to a psycho-analytical treatment, the result (the verbal meaning) will be as obscure as before to most of the readers. The poet's use of language can be compared to a psychopathic reaction of the individual to the stresses of existence ; the "stirred-up memory" and the "fulfilment of his wish" are beyond the average man's understanding ; the poet works with the help of "flashes of insight beyond meanings already stabilized in etymology and grammar. Hence the role of literature . . . in finding linguistic expressions for meanings as yet unexpressed."² Prof. Whitehead shows quite clearly that an analysis of the creative process will not bring us any nearer to a proper interpretation of meaning, especially when he says that "the truth of supreme Beauty lies beyond the dictionary meanings of words."³ If the dictionary cannot help us, perhaps the reader himself may give us a clue in his attitude, reaction, and response to the poet's work. For there is no doubt that Meaning as such cannot exist, unless it be in the reader's "mind".

The very existence of a poem, despite all the intricacies of meaning, proves that it is a vehicle of communication between

1. Sigmund Freud : *The Relation of the Poet to Day-dreaming*. Coll. Papers, Vol. IV, 1925, p. 188.

2. A. N. Whitehead : *Adventures of Ideas*, 1938, p. 291.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

one mind (the poet) and a number of other minds (the readers.). In order that a communication should be successful, there must be some common basis of experience, which would form the context within which the communication occurs. Under the most favourable circumstances the poet's and the readers' experiences will be similar, and communication between the two minds will be easily established. The common basis for these experiences will, in the case of a poem, be attitudes, not references. If there is a similarity in attitude between the poet and the reader, the latter, will be able to respond to the work in question as a whole and in a coherent way. The ordering and organizing of his own experience will in some way be similar to that of the poet. And there will be no considerable difficulty as to the meaning of the poem.

Observation has shown that this common basis is, in most cases, absent. The poet's mind and attitudes are foreign, unconceivable, and unintelligible. All that the reader can do is to "open" his mind to these new stimuli from outside and to respond to it in one way or another. The way in which he reacts will be a standard for measuring whether he has "understood" the meaning or not. Understanding, in this context, could therefore be measured in terms of attitudes and responses :

"We may say, then, that a person understands a word, if . . . the *effects* of the word are the same as those of what it is *said* to mean."¹

There are, however, several obstacles that prevent us from "understanding" the meaning of a word as measured by its "effect" upon us. The one is the context in which the word occurs which will add a certain number of different stimuli to the first one, and the other is the traditional and cultural setting in which and according to which the word is used by the poet ; the reader, therefore, has to respond, not only to one stimulus, but to a complex variety of stimuli, all of them expressing attitudes of a new and frequently unexpected kind. Meaning

1. B. Russell : *An Outline of Philosophy*, Chap. IV, p. 46, 1927.

as determined by stimulus alone will always remain unsatisfactory and will not carry with it a proper "understanding" of the work in question.

Before speaking about setting and context, we have to consider the difference between a scientist's or philosopher's use of language and that of a poet. Only if this distinction is established can we approach the problem of Meaning with regard to poetry. In the scientific use of language statements may be either true or false ; in poetry it matters very little ; the sole function of statements in poetry is to bring about attitudes and appropriate and relevant responses :

"We may either use words for the references they promote, or we may use them for the sake of the attitudes and emotions which ensue. Many arrangements of words evoke attitudes without any references being required en route. They operate like musical phrases. But usually references are involved as conditions for, or stages in, the ensuing development of attitudes, yet it is still the attitudes not the references which are important."¹

To use metaphors in a scientific statement would be dangerous and misleading ; yet, it seems, that in poetry metaphors are frequently the most definite and explicit way of expressing one's attitudes and emotions. In order to express a personal reference language will have to be used in an emotive, not a scientific or logical manner. It is this difference between a subjective and an objective reference in language that makes purely linguistic considerations of language so unconvincing :

"By reason of its phonetics and morphology, a language has an existence of its own, *independent* of the psychic tendencies of the speaker. His language comes to him as something already organized, like a tool put into his hand It is always the same instrument, and the business of the linguist lies precisely in studying the essential and permanent qualities of this instrument."²

Such a statement is probably right as regards the scientific use of language ; it is, however, very misleading if applied to the

1. I. A. Richards : *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1980, p. 267.

2. J. Vendryes : *Language, a Linguistic Introduction to History*, 1925, p. 255.

poet's use of it. A language is independent of psychic tendencies if it leads towards a *logical* arrangement of facts and statements ; the logical use of words free from the influence of both setting and context may be said to be an extremely artificial kind of behaviour. Only an incessant interplay of the various meanings of a word as it stands in a definite setting and context can help us towards free discursive thinking and its expression.

The word, as the poet uses it, is not a ready-made tool ; its meaning will depend on the verbal setting within which it occurs and on the cultural context which stabilizes and organizes the experiences behind it. Even logicians cannot dispense with setting and context : "A name has meaning only in a sentence or by suggesting a sentence. The sentence is the significant unit of language."¹ And "All the signs we are capable of interpreting occur in this way, namely, in a context of experience which alone can make these signs significant."² The literary critic as well as the teacher whose aim it is to interpret Meaning, will arrive at a relevant interpretation by means of both setting and context. A meaning, therefore, can be interpreted with the help of the verbal setting (sentence) and the cultural context (context of experience) ; whether this interpretation will be successful, that is, whether the meaning will be finally "understood", will ultimately depend on the working of the listener's "mind", his responses and his attitudes :

"A word, like any other sign, gets whatever meaning it has through belonging to a recurrent group of events, which may be called its context. Thus a word's context, in this sense, is a certain recurrent pattern of *past groups of events*, and to say that its meaning depends upon its context would be to point to the process by which it has acquired its meaning. . . . In another, though a connected sense, a word's context is the words which surround it in the utterance, and the other contemporaneous signs which govern its interpretation."³

1. B. Bosanquet : *Logic, or the Morphology of Knowledge*, 1911, p. 87, (ed. Oxford University Press, 1981).

2.* L. S. Stebbing : *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, 1980, p. 10.

3. I. A. Richards : *Interpretation in Teaching*, 1988, Preface, p. VIII.

Sometimes a change in the verbal setting involves a change¹ in the cultural context also. It seems therefore impossible to interpret words (signs) in isolation ; it is the context and the setting that control Meaning and make it communicable. Yet we know that the writer cannot supply us with the whole setting ; he will give us a nucleus around which Meaning fluctuates ; the reader will have to organize the whole range of his past experiences so as to secure some correspondence between those that are active within him and those that were active in the writer when he wrote the work in question. It is with this process of ordering and organising past experiences with regard to the fluctuations of Meaning that a literary critic or a teacher has to deal when interpreting the setting and context of a given poem. The problem is twofold : how far is the organizing of past experiences conducive to a meaning-formation in our mind ? and will the result, namely the acquired meaning be *correct* and *definite* ? Only after having answered these two questions, will we be able to speak of Meaning as determined by social and psychological factors.

To bring the fluctuations of Meaning under control and to deduce from one's past experiences and attitudes the meaning of a given word or sentence, is a process of selection. In order to understand the meaning of a poem, the reader will have to choose the "right" one out of an endless series of alternatives between meanings. He will, consciously or unconsciously, question himself as to which of his past experiences and attitudes correspond to the poet's meaning. It is this selection, choice, and questioning that determines the meaning-formation in the reader's mind :

"But whether the process is swift or leisurely, implicit and summary or explicit and discursive, our interpretation is never a mere taking up of an isolated self-complete and single meaning. For the meaning is itself a process of growth and *the outcome of a balance between possibilities of being.*"¹

1. I. A. Richards ; *ibid.*, p. 8.

If this balance has been established in the reader, he may pretend to know all about the meaning of the word in question ; and he will undoubtedly suggest that this is the only correct and definite meaning. It is in this connection that the lack of distinction between the scientific and the emotive use of language does so much harm. As the meaning of a word in an emotive context depends to a very large extent on the reader's response and attitudes, it will hardly be possible to speak of a correct and a definite meaning. A certain fluctuation of meanings will remain as long as this meaning will have to be communicated from one person to another. Neither language, nor meaning are ready-made-tools or instruments of communication. Yet we read that

"in the course of its evolution, each tongue acquires a further accuracy through processes which give the Meaning of each word. Intellectual intercourse slowly diminishes laxity of expression. By-and-by dictionaries give definitions. And eventually, *among the most cultivated*, indefiniteness is not tolerated, either in the terms used or in their grammatical combinations."¹

This is a representative statement of an 18th-century attitude towards language and meaning. To-day, among the most cultivated, indefiniteness is not only tolerated, but, as we see in contemporary criticism and poetry, even greatly encouraged. We are, perhaps, more aware to-day, that the Meaning of words is not only connected with language, but with "existence" itself. If we would know all about our existence there would be no indefiniteness about Meanings. We can only attempt to deduce Meaning *as correctly as possible*, as much as, for instance, a scientist can deduce as correctly as possible a scientific truth from the realm of existence. Meaning and Truth have that in common that they are both based upon existence or "reality". Therefore Meanings, however perfect and mature the language might be, must be in the same proportion "indefinite" as Truth, however perfect the scientific system.* In all human activities, except in science, where accuracy of statements is the chief matter, "there

1. Herbert Spencer : *First Principles*, 1862. Part I & II, ed. 1915, p. 802.

is an exuberance and fertility of meanings and values in comparison with which correctness of telling is a secondary affair.”¹

The process of selection, choice, and questioning, of which we spoke just now will, however, lead nowhere, if we realise that Meaning is not necessarily determined by “thinking”, but that an infinite variety of other factors must be taken into consideration. Selection can only be the basis ; for we have seen that it can in no way guarantee definiteness and correctness of Meaning. Apart from the selection of the relevant material from the reader’s past experiences, there will be innumerable associations of a frequently irrelevant kind which, even if organized and ordered, will distort the meaning. The commonest misinterpretations, in fact, occur because of mainly subjective associations in the reader’s mind deteriorating the “original” meaning of the poet. He will interpret the work in question, not in terms of general attitudes, but according to his own modes of behaviour or conception of life. Then communication between the artist and the reader becomes difficult ; the associative material as regards the reader remains unorganized and his response to and interpretation of Meaning will be essentially erratic and misleading.

Should we not suppose that there is a certain identity in the way in which a poet organised his associations and in which a reader does so under the stimulation of a given poem ? The supposed sameness of the associative process would then create “fixed” associations which in their course would determine meaning :

“The essence of language lies, not in the use of this or that special means of communication, but in the employment of *fixed* associations (however these may have originated) in order that something now sensible—a spoken work, a picture, a gesture, or what not—may call up the ‘idea’ of something else. Whenever this is done, what is now sensible may be called a ‘sign’ or ‘symbol’, and that of which it is intended to call up the ‘idea’ may

1. J. Dewey : *Philosophy and Civilization*, 1981, p. 9.

be called its 'meaning'. This is a rough outline of what constitutes 'meaning'." ¹

Recent investigations in experimental psychology have proved that these fixed associations do actually exist, that is to say, that we find in all languages alike "objective" meanings to subjective experiences. Dr. Wolfgang Koehler in his book on *Gestalt Psychology* quotes L. Klages, the German philosopher, who has collected many instances of "fixed" associations in language. These "objectified" associations guide the reader towards some kind of "fixed" meaning regarding the most elementary personal experiences :

"Something arouses a 'bitter' feeling in us One talks about being in a 'soft' mood. 'Sweet' love seems to occur in all countries, also 'bright' joy or 'dark' grief, and not only in my country is wrath called 'hot'. More dynamically one talks about a 'tense' expectation, this subjective experience being compared with what we feel when we touch a taut string. A certain kind of talking is called 'straight', and everybody knows immediately what is meant by it Again we feel 'attracted' towards something or inclined to 'reject' the idea of it ; our spirits are 'high' and 'low', and so forth"

And Dr. Koehler finds in this identity between the inner-world of the mind and the outer world of things a guarantee that understanding, that is communication and interpretation of meaning, can be possible, even in the case of a poet who constantly invents new applications to old meanings :

"Furthermore, there must be something at the basis of the *correct understanding* of this kind of verbal practice, when a new application and transfer of meaning is suddenly invented by some one *trying to describe his subjective state in a lively manner*. I contend that this something is a certain degree of similarity between definite experiences of the 'inner' and 'outer' world."²

If this identity really exists, then we must assume that the organizing and ordering of the associative material will be the same, to quite a considerable extent, in both the poet and the reader. Names (meanings) that are given by the poet to sub-

1. B. Russell : *The Analysis of Mind*, 1921, p.190.

2. Dr. W. Koehler : *Gestalt Psychology*, 1920, p.187sq.

jective experiences will be communicable because of their identity with the meanings in the outer world of things. In an "ideal" case, where both the poet and the reader would for instance be attacked by the same type of insanity, the interpretation of meaning would offer no difficulty to the reader ; there would be a complete identity of the associative process ; Meaning, in fact, would transform sensations and experiences into "things". No selection would be necessary. The writer and the reader will be two isolated minds unhampered by social conventions, tradition, and environment. The self-created dialect of the insane is, in this sense, the "purest" form of poetry. But whenever we speak of a sane writer and a sane reader, we shall have to consider these social conventions, traditions, and the environment in which communications of this kind occur.

The commonest theory on the interpretation of Meaning from a social viewpoint is the one that is based upon "usage" ; a word acquires a certain "definite" meaning because it has been used in that sense. Language here is no longer a simple tool or instrument, but is liable to change according to the use human beings make of it. For logical purposes such a theory is particularly useful as it dispenses with all the psychological intricacies of the problem of Meaning :

"A little reflection, therefore, shows that the meaning of the word must have arisen out of the use of the sound by persons who managed to convey their meaning thereby . . . Because a word is essentially an *instrument for the conveying of meaning*, it is always in a measure pliant. It *acquires its meanings . . . in the service of man*, and must always be prepared to take on new shades of meaning in that service."¹

In Logic words form separate entities which change and acquire meanings just as agricultural implements change or acquire their purpose according to the use human beings make of them. The "mind" does not seem to be involved in this highly artificial process. The "right" meaning of a word may be an

1. F. C. S. Schiller : *Formal Logic : a Scientific and Social Problem*, 1931, p. 16.

actual or a potential one, according to the "average" meaning found in a dictionary. "Conventional" meanings are, of course, easily understood by means of such a method. According to conventional usage they stand for something very "definite" indeed :

"A conventional sign is one that is neither a demonstrative gesture nor an imitative sound or gesture ; it is *deliberately devised* to stand for something and has thus acquired a relatively *fixed* significance so that it can be understood as referring to something *definite and the same* on each occasion of its use."¹

But how is the reader to know which sign is "conventional" and which not ? There should be a great number of signs (words) in a poem, for instance, that would appear to him essentially unconventional, although their "average" meaning (actual and potential) can be looked up in any dictionary. Here again Logic finds a way out : "Identical reference and rational convention is thus the root and essence of the system of signs which we call language."² How does this "rational convention" come about ? Is it not a common-place amongst both Logicians and Psychologists that the actual meaning of a word is frequently "irrational", that is to say, not according to what we would expect it to mean ? Is this rational convention identical with the historical meaning of a word, the evolution of its meaning from its origin to the present day ? If so, then any science of Meaning based upon History (Semantics) could solve all the problems of interpretation and communication :

"We see how necessary it is that our knowledge of a language should be supported by history. History alone can give to words that *degree of precision* which is needed for their right understanding . . . History, while explaining these words, introduces into them at the same time many accessory notions, which are not expressed. It acts after the manner of a glass, which by contracting the objects of sight, renders them *more distinct*. . . It shows us . . . many ideas which are not present, and which exist only in our memory."³

1. L. S. Stebbing : *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, 1930, p. 11.

2. B. Bosanquet : *Logic*, p. 15.

3. Michel Breal : *Semantics : Studies in the Science of Meaning*, 1920, chap. X.

Here again we find the pretension to be distinct, precise, correct, and definite in the interpretation of Meaning. The question which we have to ask ourselves is whether communication between the poet and the reader would be easier, if we would look up every word in a historical dictionary where all the possible meanings of a word are given in their chronological succession from its origin onwards. The poem will then, undoubtedly, refer to something quite definite ; but the implied meaning will be as vague as before, if the attitudes which the poet wanted to express are misinterpreted. A historical background can help us to "understand" a statement of fact ; the sign and that to which it refers, will become identical, and the meaning "precise" ; but "references", as we have seen, are something secondary in a poem ; their purpose consists only to lead towards attitudes ; it matters very little whether these references are right or wrong ; in the emotive use of language the thing referred to may even be nonsensical, if only an attitude ensues which makes the correspondence between poet and reader possible.

Only quite recently Linguists realised that the "usage" and the "rational convention" theories are unsatisfactory. In opposition to the Logicians they conceived of a language as a dynamic whole subjected to changes which are due to the environment, that is, to the classes and groups of people who use it :

"The principle involved in the majority of changes of meaning is to be sought in the division of the speakers into various groups, and in the passage of the words from one social group to another." ¹

It was easy enough to prove this assertion. Deteriorations of meaning are frequently due to a contempt which the different groups of society feel for each other, to hatred between nations, to intolerance, to fanaticism, and so forth. Language is nothing but a faithful mirror of human frailties. On the other hand, in

1. *Année Sociologique*, XI, p. 791 ; quoted in J. Vendryes, *ibid.*, p. XIV.

a polite age, when women give the tone to society, as for instance in the 18th century in Europe, language becomes more and more restricted and allusive ; and the number of words that are considered shocking increases considerably. Then there are the words that acquire a different meaning when transplanted from one country to another, because the thing for which the word stands has got a different "meaning". The word "horse" is significant in this connection. In different environments it serves different purposes : in one country its meaning is "saddle-horse", in another "draught-horse", in a third "plough-horse" and in a fourth "war-horse". The meaning of a word may also depend on the evolution of manners. The language of courtship is a good instance ; as long as it remained the privilege of a certain class, a special vocabulary had to be created, which in its turn deteriorated when courtship became accessible to all social classes. (One of the most important causes for the deterioration of meaning in the post-war world is undoubtedly the language used in Hollywood.)

Moreover, there is a tendency in modern Linguistics to associate any given language with race-mentality or race-psychology. If, for instance, all the semantic changes which a word underwent in the course of centuries in two different countries were analysed, we could come to know something about the different "mentalities" of the countries concerned ; we could perhaps define certain limits for some particular race-psychology, peculiarities due to the racial and "national" environment :

"If language is the distinctive mark of a certain thought-form, a comparative analysis of languages ought to lead to a psychology of race." ¹

If this is true for the writer, who uses language according to his racial and national environment, it certainly is true for the reader also who constantly interprets or misinterprets meaning in the light of given cultural conditions :

1. J. Vendryes : *ibid.*, p. 285 : see also : A. Darmsteter : *La Vie des Mots*, 1921, p.112sq.

"As a word or a grammatical form may contain the germ of a whole philosophy, so certain ways of reading carry implicitly with them a characteristic outlook or *culture*." ¹

Even if we suppose that both the social and the "racial" environments of the reader and the writer are the same, it will help very little as regards communication of attitudes. An analysis of the social and national forces may lead the reader towards correct and definite references, but not attitudes. The reader will respond to it as to a scientific statement, questioning or affirming the Truth of it. He will no longer correspond with the poet, but with his social environment. It seems, therefore, that an interpretation of Meaning as based upon the "usage" theory, upon rational convention, history or social and racial factors, will necessarily be one-sided and, to a certain extent, misleading. In order to see clearer the issues involved, we have to go back to the interpretation of Meaning as determined by associations, and attempt to solve the problem by means of a closer scrutiny of the psychological process implied in Meaning.

We stated at the beginning that it is in the reader's mind only that we can expect to find the meaning of a given poem. His response and attitude to the work in question will show whether he has "understood" its meaning or not. It is again in the reader's mind that we found a variety of associations which had to be organized and ordered in order to make correspondence between his and the poet's attitudes possible and to establish communication between the two. We have up to now taken for granted that there is something which we call Meaning in Words and that it can be "understood" by the reader. To prove that this assumption is right would indeed be difficult. To answer the question whether there is Meaning implied in Words rather than in Things would involve us in a lengthy discussion on Experimental Psychology. All we can do here is to point out this problem.

1. I. A. Richards : *Interpretation, ibid.*, p. 72.

"There is an old and bitter controversy in Logic as to whether we define Words or Things, and this gives us a clue to a first main division of the senses of 'definite'. There is a group of senses in which we are saying with it something about a thing; and another in which we are saying something about some representation of a thing, about a statement, or an expression, or an idea of it, and comparing this representation of it with others. The second is the more interesting and important group here." ¹

To say something "definite" about a Thing belongs no doubt to the realm of science. Statements, words, and the ideas underlying them, belong, properly speaking, to literature; that is to say, whenever we say or read something, a meaning is implied without which the thing said or read would signify nothing. The problem may become slightly too intricate, if we begin asking ourselves whether the meaning is implied in the sounds only or in the way the letters have been ordered in a given word, or in some conceptual images. A study of the Chinese language from this viewpoint would be most illuminating :

"As they appear to us and as the Chinese explain them, the words of their vocabulary seem to correspond to *conceptual images* . . . united, on the one hand, to *sounds* that appear to be endowed with the power of evoking the characteristic details of an *image* and, on the other hand, to signs that represent the *gesture*, which is noted by motor memory as essential." ²

If, therefore, we take it for granted that there is Meaning implied in every word or statement, we must not forget that this word or statement stands for some Thing. To speak of a Thing, however, implies a sense-impression of it. A Thing as such has no significance unless the sense-impression, that is, the experience, has provided a meaning which in its turn is expressed by means of a word, a statement, or an idea :

" . . . A similar consideration will show us easily that genuine sensory data cannot present 'objects.' 'Objects' cannot exist for us before sensory experience has become imbued with meaning. Who can deny that meaning

1. I. A. Richards, *ibid.*, p. 147.

2. M. Granet : "*Some Peculiarities of Chinese Thought and Language*"; In : *Revue Philosophique*, 1920. p. 104sq. (Quoted in Vendryes, p. X III.)

fundamentally determines almost all experience? Does it not finally lead to a kind of illusion? The German noun 'Igel' sounds to Germans as though no other animal but a hedgehog could have this name. 'Eagle', however, which in English is acoustically the same as 'Igel' in German, sounds to an American as though only an 'Adler' (German word for Eagle) could be called by this name. Here it is obvious that we have to discriminate between a genuine sensory experience, which is the same in both languages, and two different meanings connected with it in different countries." ¹

Sense-impression alone, such as the sounds of words or the peculiar order of letters, will never provide the reader with a meaning. Consciousness and Thought will provide the necessary link between sense-impressions and attitudes (responses). It is this link that we call meaning. Objects are imbued with meaning not because of the words that stand for them, but because of the link which consciousness apprehends between sense-impression and the ensuing attitudes. Therefore, sense-impression itself is not meaning, but only a part of it:

"Meaning is the essential part of a thought or a consciousness of an object, and . . . the sensory content, whether vivid and rich in detail or dim and scanty, is but a subordinate part, a mere cue to the meaning." ²

A word, therefore, is a sign or a symbol of an object. The consciousness of the object in question has provided it with a meaning. In this sense a word is nothing else but an objectification of Meaning that is implied in the Object. Without this "objectification" it would not "signify" or "symbolize" anything at all. It would be a mere sound complex devoid of meaning:

"No human being utters articulate sounds without an object, a purpose, a meaning. The endless configuration of sounds which are collected in our dictionaries would have no existence at all, they would be the mere ghost of a language, unless they stood there as the *embodiment of thought, as the realization of ideas.*" ³

1. Dr. W. Koehler : *Gestalt Psychology*, 1930, p. 55.

2. W. McDougall : *Body and Mind, A History and Defense of Animism*, p. 301.

3. M. Müller : *The Science of Language*, 1899, p. 51.

If these signs or symbols stand for "definite" objects about whose existence we know through our sense-impression, it should be possible to transmit the meaning of these signs without the help of the sense-impressions ; words can be understood even if actual sense-impression is absent. It is upon this conception of Meaning that communication between human beings depends :

"The use of the symbols enabled man to attain the concept more easily in as much as he could make it even more independent of direct perception by transmitting it to another brain. Nascent intelligence gradually made language a special instrument, the *organ of thought*, permitting thought to be exercised without having any immediate relation to the function of the real."¹

The same can be said with regard to the emotive use of language. Language, in that sense, would be an "embodiment of emotion" a "realization of attitudes". Experience is given a Name and therewith a Meaning. But what about the reader's response ? What about the communication without which the name loses its significance ? We are still groping with our first problem, although it is stated now in a more precise way : how can the realization and objectification of attitudes be communicated and transmitted to the reader in such a way that identical attitudes ensue ? Logic again teaches us that "a name is a sign which rouses the mind to a set of activities having an identical element."² But in an emotive use of language the "identical element" will hardly ever be the same. When Wordsworth says : "*She seem'd a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years*", we do not assume that Lucy was a "thing" and that the years actually "touched" her, nor do we question the scientific appropriateness of speaking of "earthly" years. Yet these are all names that according to logical procedure should rouse our mind to a set of activities having an identical element. In this poem by Wordsworth a set of attitudes is clearly defined. "Thing",

1. J. Vendryes, *ibid*, p. X.

2. B. Bosanquet : *ibid*, p. 12.

"touch", and "earthly", reflect experiences of a deep and personal kind. As metaphors they are explicit and "definite" and probably Wordsworth felt that in this emotive use of language he could be more precise than in the scientific use. The reader, therefore, will not take his statement literally—although the logical meaning of all these words will be quite clear to him—but will, as somebody said, go "straight to the thought behind the word, without dwelling on its literal bearing, and so restrict or extend it (the meaning) according to the intention of the speaker."¹ Anybody reading poetry will have to go to the "thought behind the word" and will have to reckon with the "intention" of the poet. There should be no doubt now that somewhere between the original experience of the poet and the verbal sign (symbol) that stands for it, the meaning is to be found.

What does actually happen in the reader's mind when he reads the word "touch" in Wordsworth's line ? The word is used here metaphorically, but in its literal sense it belongs to the realm of sense-impressions. The reader, while "going behind the word", will not need the help of a sensory stimulus in order to "understand" what is meant by it. Nor will the reader be in need of a "mental image" in order to grasp the "thought" (emotion, attitude) behind the word :

"That thought is essentially an interplay of meanings, and that these are relatively independent of the sensory cues, whether verbal or other, by means of which meaning is conveyed or communicated or embodied, is now becoming widely recognized by psychologists : and of late years the results of a number of minute introspective studies made under experimental conditions have given a new support to this doctrine of imageless thought." ²

Whenever we hear of "images" (psychic and others) with regard to the interpretation and communication of meaning, we must be aware of the fact that imagery as such does not consti-

1. Michel Breal : *ibid*, Chap. X.

2. McDougall, *Body and Mind*, *ibid*, p. 311.

tute meaning, but that in favourable circumstances it may lead towards an approximate meaning, on the condition, of course, that these images will be organized and ordered in a similar way as those of the poet :

"We use these images, make them starting-points of thought, treat them as containing approximations, to *what we mean* ; we direct ourselves to omit parts of them, or to note that they require weakening or intensification."¹

The problem of the meaning of words, in the emotive use of language, seems to be in some way or other related to the problem of the meaning of images. To go "behind a word" would therefore mean to go back to the images that made the use of this word possible, that is to say, to the very origin of the creative process. All verbal expression of these images carries with it a meaning symbolizing things. If the reader follows this process step by step he will find the meaning of these verbal expressions (signs, symbols) in the images underlying the word used, as well as in the objects for which it stands. It is then only that the reader will respond to it as a whole, and in a coherent way. And an ordered and organized response will bring about the identity of attitudes between poet and reader.

These attitudes will not be disconnected from their cultural setting or their individual colouring. They will be part of given social and individual conditions. As such they will represent, not the static and passive Meaning of Words or Things, but the more human kind of Meaning based upon dynamic experience and a balance between possibilities of being.

1. B. Bosanquet : *ibid.*, p. 89.

TAGORE AND GENERATIONS TO COME

Dhurjati Mukherjee

ON the seventy-eighth birthday of the Poet, an Indian, and more so a Bengali, feels what Maxim Gorky felt about Tolstoy. The debt of gratitude to Tagore is too heavy to be borne easily. It almost weighs on the sense of self-respect of those who were born later and thus deprived of the privilege of lighting new torches of life. Tagore has lit them all and about two generations of young men are expected to carry them on to the best of their abilities. How difficult he has made it for all of us to be original ! To a casual student of Tagore's works and activities dismay displaces the urge to action. Probably, even in the realm of feeling dialectic obtains and gratitude quietly breeds its opposite.

But the spirit of creation asserts itself in the long run. Already, the graft on the trunk of his poetry is sprouting with expectations to lead an independent life of its own at no distant date. In prose, a work-a-day style has lately evolved which though inferior to his in literary grace and nuances is adequate for the purpose in view. Tagore's music has delivered a new strain of melody which compensates its deficiencies by a vigorous existence. So with his stories, essays and novels. Not that what has followed has excelled anything of his, but that in every case the initial push has operated as an agency for fresh release and not lost itself within the Poet's personality is noteworthy in the act of his appraisal.

Let us leave the literary influence of Tagore for the moment and attend to other neglected aspects of his genius. In these days when politics is co-terminous with life, Tagore's views on politics should come to the fore. He was once the hero of the Swadeshi movement. But unlike a hero, and more like a modern mother he nursed it, to a limit. Songs, speeches and writings came

in a spate. But when he found that the movement was getting dishonest and violent he cried halt. In *The Home and the World* he pointed out the dangers of impurity besetting a shift in emphasis from the impersonal to the personal ; as in *Four Chapters*, a much later piece, he showed up the falseness of the claim of the terrorist group to demand sacrifice of the individual in the name of the party. It may seem strange, but it is true that Tagore sought to turn the attention of the public from romance and emotionalism to positive achievements. In numerous works, hardly known outside Bengal, he had been urging constructive self-help and rural uplift. In fact, these two are the keys to his nationalism. Today in the Congress Provinces, programmes of rural development centre in Better Living Societies and Self-Help Organisations. Those who are acquainted with Tagore's prose-pieces of the period before the Swadeshi movement are not surprised. If at all, they should be surprised at not finding these essays translated in local languages of other provinces and broadcast in the countryside. Surely are these articles better written than the stuff which is circulated for the good of the masses.

Similarly, the stress on the world-view which has been the chief feature of modern Indian politics was first given by Tagore. The late Chittaranjan's jibes at Tagore's internationalism had better be forgotten today in the interest of the former's reputation, when Pandit Jawaharlal has given content and substance to the outlook that was originally Tagore's. I well remember the press agitation in the pre-war days of Bengal when Tagore's internationalism was interpreted as slavish gratitude to Europe for the award of Nobel prize and stimulated political thinkers to search in protest for the soul of Bengal as counter-weight. His exposure of nationalism was even considered to be an escape from the responsibilities of political life in India of those days. But even the charge that Tagore ran away from politics when it became a serious business may be said to reflect the growth of Indian political consciousness from its stage of mendicancy to that of vain self-assertion with its refuge in myths of the past, thence to a

clearer vision of national responsibilities of self-help, and ultimately to the realisation of the historical fact that India is linked up in urgent bonds with the rest of the world that incidentally is not England. What appears like growing out of a movement for an individual is really the political development of the nation. Tagore once admired Japan when she stood for what was best in Asiatic culture, its values of beauty and discipline; he has condemned Japan when her proclaimed Asianism has become a plea for imperialist exploitation. Beneath these changes, his pattern of values remains stable as will be evident from his earlier interpretation of Chinese culture and his proclamation of its unity with the Indian.

Let there be no mistake in appraising Tagore's emphasis on culture. It is bound up with political independence in every case. Only his idea of independence is not negative. Not being based on opposition it draws its strength primarily from indigenous potentialities and secondarily from contacts with, or diffusion from, the outside world where human beings, instead of waiting on the transcendental, strain to live better by their own efforts and with the assistance of science. The only criticism that can be laid against this concept of culture is that it does not pay sufficient heed to economic forces. Tagore has not been a student of economic history and his culture has been the loser to that extent. Yet he is personally alive to the economic problems of the world; his letters from Russia have a new ring of truth. But it has been lost in the dulcet notes of his poems. But that is the tragedy of the economic life of India and Bengal. In the meanwhile let us be content with his confession that he was wrong when he justified accumulation of property by the natural law which relegates the shadow beneath the light of the lamp.

Tagore's views on history are admirably summed up in an article called "Kalantar" or Crisis which appeared in *Parichaya* a few years ago. If we compare it with what he had written regarding ancient Indian civilisation we notice the dynamics of his views. In the latter he spoke of the forests and the saints

living therein in intentional inexistence. In the former he refers to the quality of medieval Indian civilisation as affected by the Muslim conquest and differentiates it from that of the modern period in which contact with British rule has shaken our rural-community life to its foundation by the exertion of pervasive pressure. But he refers to the fruits of science and technology and envisages a state of Indian culture when it will have shed its obscurantist accretions. Above all, history is at last interpreted in terms of crisis as opposed to providential evolution. No doubt this is different from his earlier notions of development which partook of a Crocean unfolding of the Divine Spirit. Since then he has not written on history, and the young Indian looks elsewhere for the thread that knits India with China, Abyssynia and Spain.

Tagore on Society has not been studied with due attention. Here, as elsewhere, he has suffered from Indian apathy. Yet his *Samaj* was the first presentation of the organic view of society in modern India. His sense of shame at its injustices never blinded him to the peculiarities of our social structure. The essay on Indian family life and marriage in Keyserling's *Book of Marriage* is a brilliant review of the ideals, whereas his biting articles against the inequities of Indian caste and family compete with Swami Vivekananda's hammer-strokes in effectiveness. Here (as in the cult of Charkha) Tagore has been more radical than Mahatmaji, whose efforts at social reconstruction won his unstinted allegiance without making him forget the basic injustice involved therein. For Tagore, the Harijans have been the bearers of a culture which by its dissentient virtues acted as a corrective to the Brahminical hieratics; and so, any attempt to bring the Harijans back within the priestly domination is fraught with danger and must be welcomed, as it must be, on its merits, but with caution. Mahatmaji has truly called him the Sentinel on the Watchtower, but it seems that his definitions do not always carry weight with his disciples.

In all this the width of the Poet's outlook is striking.

When a large part of the modern dictator's appeal is poetic we can do no more than exonerate the poets from the charge of being visionary and occasionally profit from their insight into politics. This demand becomes more insistent when the poet is a great one, has lived a full life in conditions which have engaged the totality of his personality in protests against political subjection and social oppression and in hard endeavour to utilise the crisis of the world for the benefit of the country which he remakes and loves. In short, Tagore's is the only spirit that possesses the requisite sympathy and detachment to evaluate the political achievements of modern India. Mahatmaji knows it. If the leftist leaders knew it equally well they will gain. They will go beyond him in diverse and longer ways, but look they must, behind and around, to get a glimpse of his encouraging and lightning glances. For, after all, the Socialists are the only set of people who are deeply concerned with culture, its past, present and future, and Tagore is one who is responsible for much of it that is of India today.

A BAS RELIEF

Lo, on thy godlike brow superbly poised
 Beauty twin-born with centuried silence broods
Unmindful of the years ; thy fame is noised
 Abroad beyond the mountain solitudes,
Beyond the market-place where still are sold
 Poor human hearts crushed by the wheels of life.
Two thousand years have gone, man's greed for gold
 Is with his nobler heritage at strife.

The air blows purer here, my spirit turns
 To thee to contemplate thy tranquillity ;
Around thy lovely head a halo burns
 Defying all that Beauty still may bless.
Hark, now the tom-toms throb, across the street
I hear the echoing sound of pilgrims' feet.

E. H. d'Alwis.

W. W. PEARSON

C. F. Andrews

NEARLY fifteen years have now passed since that fatal accident occurred in Italy in September 1924 which robbed W. W. Pearson of his life. He had leant against a carriage door, which was on the latch and opened outwards, and had fallen on the railway line when the train was at full speed. He lingered for a week and died after great suffering. His last conscious words were, "My one and only love—India."

I have already told the story of his life in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* long ago, but it seemed to me that the time had come to add to it some further reminiscences ; and I have very gladly undertaken the task, because my own life was so closely intertwined with his. We came to Santiniketan together and also went abroad together to South Africa and Australia and Fiji with our Gurudev's blessings.

On our first arrival, in 1914, we occupied the corner room where Nepal Babu had stayed before close to Nuton Bari. Kalimohan was quite close at hand and Gurudev himself lived in the upper room of Nuton Bari, in his own extremely narrow quarters.

Everything is now so changed, that it is very difficult even to picture those early days at the Asram just a quarter of a century ago. The *sal* trees were there, of course, and the mango groves, and the *amlaki* trees, just as they are now : but there were then extremely few buildings. In the centre of the Asram stood the Guest House. Dipu Babu, the eldest son of Dwijendranath Tagore, occupied one part of it. The temple with its marble floor was there, just the same as it is now, and the seat of Maharshi under the two *chattim* trees marked the place of his illumination. Towards the west of Santiniketan main building were low thatched dormitories leading on to the kitchen

where we took our common meals together. There were very few other buildings except the thatched cottage, called Benu Kunja.

Beyond Benu Kunja, it might be roughly said that the Asram itself ended. All the way, up to the Santal village and far beyond to Surul, there was open country. Agricultural experiments were just being tried at the old manor house, at Surul, now called Sriniketan; but on that side no other building had been erected and the big house itself was in disrepair and also malaria-stricken. I remember how Santosh Mazumdar first went out to live there, and was driven back by severe malignant malaria. Though this old house had been bought from Major Sinha in 1912, yet for many years it seemed as though this bad type of malaria which had decimated the whole neighbourhood, would persist and prevent any permanent residence. Willie Pearson used often to walk over to Surul and back again, specially when Santosh was there; for he was very fond of walking and had a great affection for Santosh.

To the south of the Asram, there were a few more low dormitories; and then at last came Nichu Bangla, where Dwijendranath Tagore had his home. This house stood all alone in its garden, where Borodada* used to walk backwards and forwards every morning, counting his steps as he went. There were no further buildings on the way to the railway station till one came to Bolpur village, which was quite small at that time before the rice mills sprang up on every side. In order to go down to the station we used to take bullock carts in those days and an hour would be spent on the journey.

On the North, where Uttarayan now stands, there was nothing but open country. Willie Pearson was the first pioneer. He built a very small thatch cottage, out in the wilderness, and this attracted the Poet by its solitude. In the course of time the

* Dwijendranath Tagore, being the eldest brother of Rabindranath Tagore, was called Borodada. For reminiscences of him, see, Vol. II, Part IV, and Vol. III, Part IV, of this Journal.—*Ed.*

Poet too was tempted to go out there, though at first neither he nor Willie Pearson stayed there altogether. Out on the horizon, very far distant, there was a line of scattered palm trees. No country side could have looked more solitary and desolate ; but at sunrise and sunset it had an extraordinary beauty.

It may well be asked, "How did all the staff and students manage to find accommodation ?" That was, indeed, a perpetual puzzle, and many times we have laughed together over it. But somehow we managed to fit in together, and we were all the happier, I believe, on account of our very slender resources. Certainly, we all knew one another intimately in a manner that is much more difficult today !

The Poet's own room was the tiniest of all. A mosquito net used to occupy the whole space inside, when it was put up each evening. It had to be cleared away in the day time ; and the Poet had an extraordinary little nook just at the top of the stone steps, where he used to do all his writing. We sometimes used to call this room Gurudev's 'nest', for out of that tiny nest came some of his most beautiful songs. Dinu, the son of Dipu Babu and grandson of Borodada, occupied the rooms below. He could thus be summoned at a moment's notice when the Poet had composed another poem and set it to music, which had immediately to be learnt by heart.

Willie Pearson enjoyed to the full living so close to the Poet at this creative centre of Bengali music and song. He would himself spend long hours with Dinu seeking to learn the latest words and tunes. For Pearson had the artistic temperament right up to his finger tips, and he had acquired an almost passionate delight in Bengali music. He could also have been an artist, if he had cared to devote himself entirely to painting. Only the other day, Nandalal Bose showed me some rapid water colour sketches on "rice paper", which Willie had made in Japan with brush work in Japanese style. They revealed the touch of an artist, and one could have wished that he had been able to carry his studies further.

It was Willie Pearson, who first took me out to meet Borodada, as he sat on his own verandah, with the birds and squirrels all round him,—his calm countenance full of peace in the midst of a world at strife. It is easy to recall even now the merry laughter of that hour when we first met together and Willie introduced me. Willie could talk to him in Bengali, and this pleased Borodada ; for it was always a “bother” to him (to use his own characteristic word) either to speak or write in English.

From that day forward my heart was given to this eldest brother of the Poet, with his child-like character, so innocent of any guile. Willie himself was fully absorbed in the boys’ amusements each afternoon, after School was over. He would take them out on long walks for Nature Study, or join with them in their dramatic and musical performances. All these things took up his time after school hours, and he was therefore more than glad when I was able to arrange each evening to go from five to seven o’clock and sit with Borodada. The latter would tell me what he had been reading and thinking and writing all through the long day, which was broken only by a siesta in the afternoon. He led a very regular life, almost like a clock in its time schedule. The one period each day when he was free for a talk was just after five in the evening.

While Willie Pearson was relieved and would scamper away with the boys, it was an inestimable privilege to me to get to know Borodada in this way. Willie and I would often talk over what he had told me, when we met at supper later on ; and thus we used to share together all our new found treasures. For Borodada was entirely original in what he said and did. He taught me new ways of looking at Indian life and above all at India’s religious experience. It was quite easy to see, also, that he enjoyed these times in the evening, as much as I did, when the work of the day was over. They broke through the monotony of his mathematically regulated life at a time when he wished to get away from his own thinking. His affection for



Pencil sketch of W. W. Pearson by Abanindranath Tagore

me grew deeper and deeper, and it was a great sadness to him, and to me also when I was obliged to go abroad. If for any special reason I was unable to come to him on some afternoon, it was necessary for me always to send a little note beforehand to tell him of my absence, in order to relieve him of any anxiety. When I could not come, Willie Pearson used often to go instead. Thus we both kept touch with him throughout each term time, when we were at the Asram.

Willie had his own singular way of living among the students and sharing their pleasures with them. It was so unique that no one has ever been able to follow him since or to gain such a remarkable influence with the students. He had a genius for friendship, and used to share his affection with all the students rather than make friends with one or two, who would in that case have tried to monopolise all his time. He was very happy indeed at the manner in which the boys of the School had changed his English name Pearson into Priya Sen, meaning one who was dearly loved. In Japan, it became Priya San. Friendship was at the very centre of his character and the epithet *priya* admirably expressed this.

In that corner room where we both lived at first, near to Nuton Bari, the difficulty at times was very great, owing to the stream of boys who came at all hours of the day to talk to Willie Pearson on some subject or another. It was very hard for me to engage in concentrated work under those conditions.

Things changed for the better when we built another house, just opposite Nuton Bari, for which Pearson provided most of the money by selling a small bungalow which he had bought long ago at Balasore. It rightly received the name of Pearson Kuthi, but now is known as Dwarika.

This house has now been changed and altered out of all recognition. A second storey has been added and many other rooms besides. It has now become the office centre of the College, with rooms also for student boarders. When I went to see Anil Chanda, the Principal of the College, a short time ago, I could

still recognise the room on the north side where I used to do my writing undisturbed while Willie occupied a room on the south side.

After our visit to South Africa, the boys from Phoenix Asram came at the Poet's invitation to stay in Santiniketan. They filled up the quadrangle close to Nuton Bari and Willie Pearson and I used to teach them English by reading with them and explaining Gurudev's poems. Willie was immensely happy to have this extra bit of work to do.

One of the things that occupied an immense amount of Willie's time and gave him endless satisfaction was a deep friendship with the Santal villagers who lived on the road to Surul. He loved their child-like nature which had much in common with his own. His favourite walk was to go out in the evening along the road to Surul with a number of boys from the School accompanying him. They would be uproariously happy while going along with him and would talk at the top of their voices the whole way. Willie would give them lessons meanwhile in geography and natural history, pointing out to them the harm done by the heavy monsoon rains eating away the unprotected soil. When they reached the village, they would play games with the village children and would often hold a very irregular "night school" at which the Santal boys would be taught a little arithmetic and also the Bengali alphabet. It may be that the actual teaching was soon forgotten by these wayward children who love Nature more than learning, but the friendship thus cemented would not be easily lost.

Willie Pearson took endless pains about this Santal village. No one had ever spent so much time upon it before. In the long run he was able to get the District Board to build a *pucca* well, which has given a good water supply to the village ever since. He also planted some eucalyptus saplings, one of which was able to withstand the depredations of the goats which swarm in every Santal village. This tree rose higher and higher and was the pride of the district. It became called "Pearson's tree", just as

the well was called "Pearson's well." Then, alas ! one year a strong "North Wester" blew over the exposed country and the tree was torn up by the roots.

"Where is Pearson's Tree ?" I asked, on my return from South Africa.

"It was blown down in the storm, last year," was the sad reply. Whether any other tree that we have planted since will grow, remains still an open question. For it is very difficult to get them strongly rooted enough to withstand both storm and drought.

Some time after the railway accident in Italy which I have described, whereby Willie Pearson was killed, the boys of the Asram were keeping, according to their usual practice, the anniversary of this day in September. In the late evening some jars were placed along the road, which is now called Pearson Road, and lights were placed inside which threw their beams upward. The Choir of the School went up and down the road singing the songs which Willie Pearson chiefly loved.

Later on in the evening I was asked to preside at a meeting where speeches were made. I referred in what I said to the Pearson Road, along which we had just been walking up and down, singing our songs in chorus. This road, I said, ran direct from the Asram to the Santal village. Therefore, the row of lights, which had been placed there for the anniversary, pointed the way to the Santal village and the Pearson Well which he had caused to be built. We must, I said, go on with this work which he had thus left for us when he died. He was always a reconciler between rich and poor, educated and uneducated ; and we must continue his work of reconciliation.

Later on in the evening, a very small boy came up to me, on the tip-toe of excitement, and said in Bengali, "I can tell a better story than that !" I was much amused by his eagerness and told him to say what was in his mind:

"Why," he said, "the sun rises over here at the back of the Asram in the East and the sun sets behind the Santal village in

the West. The Pearson Road runs thus from East to West, and Pearson was always doing just what this Pearson Road does. He was bringing East and West together and making them one. That was his work at the Asram."

I told the little boy that his story was much better than mine, and that we must all try to live up to it. At the Asram, where Pearson's spirit is still with us both in our work and in our play, whenever we think of him, we always think of freedom and originality. He was the very opposite of the conventional teacher. I remember one of his own favourite stories, which he often told us about a friend of his from England, who visited the Asram for the first time. This friend went up to a small boy, who could speak a little English, and asked him what he specially learnt at Santiniketan. The little fellow answered, "We learn to be brave." Obviously what was in his mind was this, that the boys were given plenty of freedom, and were trusted with plenty of responsibilities. They were not drilled and disciplined like a dull herd which has no will of its own.

If this reputation can continue, there will be no fear for the future. Of all the things that our Poet-Founder would wish to be remembered by, it would be this, that at his Asram the lives of little children are allowed to develop naturally and normally. *This* education leads along the true pathway of courage and unites East and West together. Because Willie Pearson kept to the end the heart of a child, his gift of service to our Asram was most precious. Others have brought us much learning. We have had also those who have possessed talents of their own which were of value to us in our work. But the spirit of the child, frank, free and courageous, with infinite hope shining through the dull routine of daily life—this is indeed a treasure, which has made our Asram truly rich and helped our upward growth. Here was a lavish gift, which Willie Pearson gave us, and therefore his name will be remembered.

THE RENASCENCE

A Modern Challenge

Dr. Amiya Chakravarty

MODERNS as we are, it would do us good once a while, to look at our ancient past and feel humble. The benighted Middle Ages, which we denounce, or the Renaissance in Europe which we patronisingly applaud, would offer much that we might emulate, in dignity of intellect and in effort against tremendous odds. Suffering from martyrdom we make scape-goat of circumstance ; —with phrases such as “the transition period”, “this critical moment”, “these difficult times”, etc., we soothe a rankling conscience. Men in the “Dark Ages”, we are apt to forget, faced even more difficult times than ours and put their greatness at the service of the good things of life.

The Renaissance is the turning point ; we have, in our text books, dramatically divided European culture into two big white-washed and black-washed blocks : the dark Medieval period, and eras of enlightenment. That the roots of the Renaissance lay in medieval history and were plentifully fed by it is often forgotten. Professorial habits of thinking in terms of centuries and labelled epochs die hard, but the chronology of growth is not the chronology of underlined dates following strictly one upon another for class examination.

Creative movements which united the Middle Ages with the Renaissance and found further expression in the latter, are admirably indicated in a passage from the veteran journalist J. A. Spender, quoted in Wickham Steed’s *The Press*. Referring to the ferment in the earlier epochs, Spender says :

“There has been nothing quite like it Emperors, ecclesiastics and other kinds of dictators in the Middle Ages

would no doubt have liked to keep at a distance all opinions which they thought dangerous, but they were left without the apparatus for doing so. Preaching friars went from country to country ; famous teachers and wandering scholars passed from university to university ; their books, written in Latin, which was the *lingua franca* of all educated people, were read in every country by the politically influential. In this way there was a common fund of thought and opinion which even in the most autocratic countries saved the pool of knowledge from becoming stagnant."

Spender most wittily brings his criticism home to our minds :

"What in our days, I wonder, would happen to Erasmus, that greatest of journalists who went from Court to Court all over Europe, who lectured everywhere and whose pamphlets and letters were eagerly read wherever intelligent people thought about Church and State. It seems to me quite certain that any one of the modern dictators would have laid him by the heels as soon as he appeared on their frontiers."

We shall agree ; but our agreement would involve personal responsibility for the civilisation that we are shaping.

The greatest good a Renaissance can bring is, therefore, *pursuit of truth*. The spirit of free enquiry, respect for individuality, and co-operation in social reform are necessary factors. Idealism strengthened by material advance, creative impulse modulated and shaped by orderly technique go to the making of a new era. Development in the economic, political and social spheres had already started in the Middle Ages and made the prolonged efflorescence known as the Renaissance possible. Henry O. Taylor, the distinguished modern critic of the Renaissance has exploded much scholastic myth which grew on a purely romantic view of history and in his book, *Thought and Expression in the 16th Century*, revealed that mental illumination had to be sustained by material prosperity and was often produced by it.

The rise of collective enterprise, commerce and accumulating wealth led to a higher standard of living, and leisure for creative thought ; cities and communities grew ; intellectual and artistic competition ensued ; the great humanists, educators and literary people settled down in cities and marts of trade. "It was no accident," says a distinguished historian, "that Individualism, humanism and Italian painting attained their majority in an age which saw the invention of printing and the great geographical discoveries"

When we turn our eyes to the peaks of the Renaissance which caught the ascending light, we find that in the great creative minds the spiritual and the material had achieved harmony. Leonardo da Vinci was equally at home with his visions transcribed in colour, and with his scientific inventions and applications relating to the advance of material civilisation. "The Last Supper", "Mona Lisa", as well as the first designs of aeroplanes, and of scientifically water-tight bridges for Italian rivers, emanated from the same tirelessly creative hands. A poet like Dante was a seer in the fullest sense : his eyes saw beauty, and the wonder of life, but they also penetrated the moral and political problems of his time ; the human and the divine met in his beatific contemplation. Human love had never been shown in such spiritual light in European poetry. Recognition of woman as companion, with equal rights in man's earthly journey towards paradise, came to inspire Renaissance poetry. The linking up of this realisation with monogamy and the sanctity of marriage was gradually made possible. The Humanists helped in fighting superstitions, in laying down principles of law and equity through the study of the Roman Law, and in bringing the light of thought into dark recesses of decadent imagination. From the time of Charlemagne this legalising of moral laws had begun, though the process still continues. The Renaissance did not go far beyond intellectual clarification, and they rescued Chivalry and ideal Knighthood from the spurious romance and pageantry into which they had degenerated. But their social aspirations

were built on the dignity of manhood and womanhood ; true gallantry and good deeds were glorified. It was, however, left to the early group of "Christian Humanists" as they are called, to introduce the spiritual grace without which Hellenic philosophy would have remained alien, and not become an ally of Christian service.

Perfect fusion of intellectual adventure with a deeply religious humanity would be rare in any age, and the Renaissance was mainly characterised by the illumination of rational imagination, but the work of the Christian Humanists persisted and played a dominant part in shaping European thought. In the post-Renaissance poetry of Milton it found large utterance ; but apart from literature, in every domain of human activity the great Reformist spirit, which lay at the heart of the Renaissance, slowly changed the texture of social relationship and made the growth of democracy possible.

Italy looms large in our story ; great artists like Michael Angelo and da Vinci, great literary figures like Dante and Boccaccio, scholars like Lorenzo de Medici and Ariosto, religious leaders like Luther and Erasmus are names familiar to school boys. But the army of silent workers who wrote grammars, commentaries, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, epitomes, etc., are known to a few scholars. The part played by Italian engineers, architects, ship-builders or organisers of business and industry is known to other specialists. But specialists have yet to learn the art of pooling their knowledge. An adequate survey of the Renaissance—or of any other period of civilisation—in terms of economic, scientific and cultural movements has yet to come. The brilliant young scholar of Oxford—Daiches, following Taylor, has made an attempt in his *Literature and Society* and his chapter on the Renaissance, while sparing us from text-book generalisations, gives a vivid picture of the multifarious, but fundamentally united, activities of the Medieval and early Renaissance age.

France caught the flame in her architecture ; her literature saturated with romance found a new intellectual

inspiration. The castles of Touraine, the Tuileries, old French buildings from medieval fortresses to pleasure-houses, and aspiring columns of stone in her perfect cathedrals and towers, testify to Renascent architecture. Montaigne's prose and the birth of the French Drama will leap into the mind as flowerings of the Renaissance but greater, perhaps, than all was the laughter of Rabelais which rang through the soil of France. From Rabelais to the stern reformist, Calvin, sent from France to monastic Geneva, is a journey of contrasts. But the great wonder of the Renaissance was that it could present so many genuine stories in a single tale.

Rembrandt in Holland and Vandyck, the great Flemish artist, Ignatius Loyola and Cervantes of Spain, Martin Luther in Germany,—one could go on with memorable names but that would be a pastime for many evenings. Even the great names of the *Quattrocento* would take up many hours. Before sailing to English shores, therefore, I would incantate the names of another group—and they, too, are household words, connected for ever with far seas and widening horizons. I refer, of course, to Spain of more fortunate days and to Portugal. Pizarro's conquest of Peru, Columbus' discovery of America, Cortes' conquest of Mexico, and the discovery of India by Vasco da Gama need no emphasizing. Part piracy and buccaneering, part scientific and humanitarian, these voyages and adventures brought Europe in touch with a larger universe and enriched her in many ways. Not only did the Spanish renascence lead to the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon and bring prosperity to the peoples, but it also spread the infection of daring deeds, salt sprays and battling keels, as well as thirst for knowledge to entire Europe. The great sea-dogs, Drake and Raleigh, carried England's banner to remote climes and lands; their ships came sailing down the Thames with merchandise and tales of wonder which shook the nation. From the Elizabethan court spread new waves of culture, enlivening art and social life; the markets expanded and flourished.

Renascence had come to England. The lonely prophetic voice of Langland, preaching the rights of men and protesting against tyranny ; the Chaucerian vision in which the mundane and the human had met in a single pilgrimage, had ushered the dawn in the Middle Ages : now came the broadening day of knowledge and neighbourliness. Caxton's printing press brought Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and its rich stores of romance to a growing literary public, but romance now had become an incentive to nationalism. Great deeds had become possible in actual life. Humanism had struck roots in English soil : More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* were to intellectualise imagination and to lay the foundation of science. In Germany the Renascence had come mainly through religion : the Bible had become the centre of the new Humanism. The same spirit which had applied critical knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to sacred scripture and purifying the text, restored faith to greater intensity, now burned in the English Renascence. The country which had produced Wycliffe was ready to accept the spirit of Erasmus and Luther.

In this attempt to combine knowledge with spiritual experience lies the significance of the Renascence for our Age. Reformation and creative imagination go together in a time of great awakening. Intellectual ferment is characteristic of the modern world ; there are indications, that a deeper current of spiritual reformation is also gathering force. Inward faith clarifying thought by reason, and the scientific mind strengthening faith by knowledge, would lead to a rebirth of civilisation. If that process is at work in India, and in the world outside, then a great Renascence has begun.

JOGU, THE GARDENER

Rabindranath Tagore

A garland of jasmines round my neck,
alone on the terrace I sat,
while the moon shone bright overhead,
with a pervasive hint of flower petals
from the land of the gods.

As I sat there alone,
musing on the days gone by,
there fluttered in a bright young thing—
my grand-daughter—
radiant with the rapture of twenty glad summers.

Tripping up to me on hurried little feet,
she flashed a smile from a corner of her eye,
and archly asked,
“Whose garland has found favour
this bright and lovely evening?”

“Whoever the person be,” I answered,
simulating hesitancy with downcast eyes,
“the name must remain a secret.
Jealousy is too inflammable an explosive
to be carelessly provoked.”

Pertly the young maiden rejoined,
“Is my lot, indeed, so sorry
as to quarrel with a nameless creature
over the right of garlanding?
I shall simply snatch the thing away
and wear it in my braided hair,
if you tell not the name.”

"Why need you embarrass me," I pleaded,
"when you might guess yourself?"
Smiling naughtily she cried,
"Ah ! who else but Chhabi—my classmate
at the Brahmo Girls' School !
Haven't I noticed how she hides her eyes
at the mere mention of your name ?"

"Well," said I, "since you are dying to know the name,
it is none other than Jogu, the gardener."
"Alas, to such a pass you have come !"
She retorted. "Has old age abandoned you
to the mercy of a common gardener ?"

"Or I may have outgrown the need
of being charmed by bright young things—
like you." I answered.
"When the golden mist of youth's glamour is lifted,
it is easy to feel the sweet pathos of the flowers
woven by the hard and knotty fingers of Jogu.
He mingles with the fragrance of the flowers
the aroma of a love, dumb and deep.

"I hardly dare confess this to smart moderns like you,
lest you accuse me of preaching a sermon,
and dub me didactic, in your critic's jargon.
I swear by you,
a poet I am and no preacher,
though I like less your cultivated flowers
and prefer far
those grey and dusty blossoms
that crowd the ragged branches
of the yonder nameless tree
Don't, I pray you, turn your full-moon face away.

“To youth and beauty and to bright young things.
long have I offered my poet’s homage
in noisy rhymes and in passionate songs
And now will you quarrel, if I say,
this garland of Jogu, the gardener,
warms my weary heart ?”

But my grand-daughter only smiled,
“Under the pretence of poesy,
you bring from out your pocket
your ever-full purse of moral maxims.
And this I call
the fault of habit.”

RABINDRANATH AND THE ASRAMA OF EARLY DAYS*

Kshitimohan Sen

IN July 1908, I arrived at Bolpur station en route to Santiniketan, to join the teaching staff of the School which had been started there by Rabindranath Tagore seven years before. The night had already fallen and it was raining heavily. At that time bullock carts were the only means of conveyance available. I, however, spent the night at the station and started for my destination on foot early next morning. Bolpur then was sparsely populated and I had not proceeded far when the strains of a distant melody came floating on the morning breeze. The Poet, seated on the balcony of his cottage, Dehali, was welcoming the rising sun with his beautiful song, *Lift me up from slumber, my Lord, . . .* etc.¹ The Poet's voice was exceedingly rich and powerful in those days and in the quiet of an early morning his song could be heard more than a mile away. The grateful memory of the voice which thus greeted me has remained with me to this day.

The asrama in those days was very much smaller and humbler in appearance. There were but few huts, and the teachers shared the same roof with the pupils. The only exception was the late Jagadananda Roy, who being a widower with little children, had a hut to himself. We were a mere handful in the asrama, not exceeding fifty in all, and had our meals in common in the general kitchen. Among my new colleagues I was happy to discover two old friends and fellow-students, Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya and Bhupendranath Sanyal. While students in Benares they had nicknamed me "Thakurdada", and to my great embarrassment they now released the secret.

* Translated from the original Bengali by Kshitish Roy.—*Ed.*

1. তুমি আগনি জাগাও করে . . .

When I arrived the asrama was slowly recovering from the terrible shock caused by the untimely death of Satish Chandra Roy. Those who have read his *Guru Dakshina* would realise what type of man he was : an uncommon intellect wedded to a deep and profound faith in the higher destiny of man. It was, by the way, Satish Chandra who made current the name, "Gurudeva", by which the Poet is known in the asrama, though it was originally Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya who first used it.

Dehali, where the Poet was then staying, was a very small house. I was at first surprised that he should have chosen so humble a residence. It was later when I had come to know him better that I understood that it was characteristic of him not to despise a thing for want of either magnitude or magnificence. It was this same trait which made him love and trust little children, and which maintained his faith in the ideals of this asrama, despite its very humble beginnings.

These ideals were inspired by his deep and sincere faith in the sadhana of ancient India. He wanted to re-create those great traditions of close contact with nature and common humanity which had made the forest schools of ancient India ideal centres for the right type of education. At the same time he aimed at delivering the tender, growing minds of little children from the rigid system and lifeless syllabus of the existing schools. He believed that education, to fulfil its purpose, must pay due regard to the personality of the growing child and insisted on close personal contact between the teacher and his pupil.

On a lovely stretch of upland, near the little station of Bolpur, the poet began his experiment in education with only two pupils. The spot, having been chosen by his father, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, for quiet meditation and spiritual sadhana, had for him particularly auspicious associations. He had little funds to aid him and had to face innumerable obstacles. A venture like this was naturally regarded by prudent people as a poet's whim, and where it was not received with scepticism, it was greeted with ridicule. Such people need

not be blamed, for it is given to very few to perceive great possibilities, in small beginnings.

In one of his Poems (*Naivedya*, No. 99) * Rabindranath says : *Give me the strength never to belittle the humble and the poor !* The strength he prayed for has ever distinguished his character. He always had a genuine love and solicitude for the humble tenants on his private estate, who fully returned that love. The following anecdote may show the deep regard in which he was held by them. Once he was to go out on business with the district Magistrate who was an Englishmen. In the bureaucratic Bengal of those days, a district Magistrate and a white one at that, used to be held in the greatest awe. And yet the person who was to arrange for their conveyance secured only one palanquin. When rebuked, he explained that he did not deem it fit that any other person, whoever he might be, could do otherwise than walk, while their beloved master rode.

In the asrama too I found most of the menials were from the "untouchable" stock. But due to the Poet's influence, no one treated them as such, with the exception of one or two fastidious members. This unorthodoxy on a large scale was a common feature of this institution, long before the country adopted it as part of the programme for national regeneration.

For little children too he had love as well as respect. He never ceased to protest against the adult attitude which unconsciously humiliates the child and which is reflected in the so-called "juvenile" branch of our Bengali literature. His own method of teaching children was free from any such complex, with the result that he could draw them very near to him and they would listen to him in rapt attention as though he was one of them. He was their companion, tending birds and other pets with them, teaching them how to take care of trees and flowers. In the evening he would sit among them and entertain them in various ways. He would extemporise stories, talks and poems for them,

or would make them act dramas, read poems or essays. These informal gatherings which were known as "majlis", where both teachers and pupils gave free play to their creative expression, were a most important element in the education of children. Towards the success of these educative entertainments the genius of the late Dinendranath Tagore and Ajit Kumar Chakravarty contributed not a little. Sometimes these soirees were arranged in some neighbouring *sal* forest or on the undulating wastes of the neighbouring *kehoai* land. On their way back the boys would challenge the Poet to a race and be defeated each time, for thirty years ago he was a strong man and led an active life. He never took a conveyance from Bolpur to the asrama and always trusted to his legs.

I have already mentioned my old friend, Pandit Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya. Besides him there were Jagadananda Roy, the well-known writer on popular science, Haricharan Bandopadhyaya, the venerable lexicographer, and Ajit Kumar Chakravarty, a brilliant writer and litterateur, who, if any one, took the place of Satish Chandra Roy. About one year after my arrival, Nepal Chandra Roy joined the staff. He had wanted to join the Bar and take to politics, but his ex-student, Ajit Kumar, persuaded him to come and work here for a while before he made up his mind. That "while" lasted for more than twenty-five years. The Poet has called his nephew, the late Dinendranath Tagore, the keeper of his songs, and so he was. He was a musician of uncommon powers and, as a teacher of Bengali songs, he was incomparable. His music was his free gift to the asrama and it was mostly due to him that the asrama was full of a spirit of festive joy. It is his students who have spread the Poet's songs all over India and have made them appreciated. As soon as the Poet had composed a new song, "Dinu" would be called to "catch" it, before the author lost it in the ecstasy of another creation. These songs would pour out of Rabindranath so fast that he could not retain the original tunes for long. Sometimes "Dinu" would be called in as many as eight times a

day and at all hours. Bengal can never be too grateful to Dinendranath for having preserved this treasure of music for future ages.

I have said before that I arrived in the asrama during the rains. At that time the Poet was first thinking of reviving the ancient and beautiful tradition of celebrating the seasons by appropriate festivals. As, soon after, he was called away from the asrama on business, he communicated his desire to us and left it to our resources to improvise a festival of the rainy season. We all met and divided our responsibility. Dinu Babu took upon himself to select the suitable songs, Ajit Babu to arrange recitals of Gurudev's poems on rains, while we undertook to cull out from Sanskrit literature appropriate *slokas* for the occasion. The ceremony, which was performed on a dais erected in traditional style against a background of blue screen, was appreciated by all, and the Poet, on his return, expressed his satisfaction at the reported success of the celebration. This was the humble genesis of the beautiful tradition, now associated with Santiniketan, of holding seasonal *utsavs* (festivals), which people come from all over India to witness.

When the autumn came we were again given the task of selecting suitable verses from the Vadas for the *utsav*, while the Poet set himself to composing new songs for the season. Like the *shinli* flowers of that season, the songs came in rich profusion, and the Poet began to think of some way of stringing them together round some simple theme. Thus was born the lyrical drama, *Sarodotsav*. * Taking advantage of my nickname, Thakurdada, to which I have already referred, the Poet put me in for that part when the drama came to be staged. But the Thakurdada of *Sarodotsav* has to sing on the stage, and no amount of my pleading would convince the Poet that I could not sing. At last when he discovered that I really could not do justice to his songs, Ajit Chakravarty was asked to take over the part of the

* It included one or two songs written at an earlier period.

নব নব রূপে এসে। আগে quoted in 1894 was adapted for the drama referred to.

Thakurdada, while I was to act the Sanyasi. But the difficulty was only partly removed, for even the Sanyasi has to sing a few songs. At last it was arranged that I was to do the acting and the Poet himself would transmit the music from behind the wings. The audience were amazed at my "wonderful" musical performance and commented that at last some one had appeared who could rival Rabindranath's voice. I was highly gratified with this easy celebrity and did not reckon what it would cost me later when people invited me to sing in social gatherings and would not accept the excuse that I could not—for had they not heard me with their own ears?

After this, at different times and on different occasions, *Achalayatan*, *Dakghar*, *Raja*, *Falguni*, *Prayaschitta*, and other dramas were staged. These and other plays were all rehearsed under the direction of the Poet, who sometimes took part himself. He was a superb actor, as those who have seen him act will testify. In all these dramatic ventures he had a faithful lieutenant in "Dinu".

The Poet's daily life was lived in the simplest style. He had only one servant, by name Umacharan. The master treated him with a degree of familiarity which the servant fully reciprocated. Umacharan had a keen sense of humour and fully appreciated his master's jokes. The Poet's treatment of his servants has always been characterised by his humanity and the servants have also repaid that kindness by loyalty and devotion. After Umacharan's death, his place was taken by a servant from Orissa by name Sadhu. The look of set gravity on his face was such that it intimidated everybody. His master used to say, "Sadhu is so formidably grave that he might almost be taken for my guardian." When Sadhu retired after long and meritorious service, he was succeeded by his compatriot, Banamali, who is still in service. This simple and devoted soul, who has grown old in service, can claim to be associated with several of his master's poems. One day as he was bringing a glass of sherbet for his master, he found the latter engaged in company. It was a late winter morning,

presaging the advent of Spring. Banamali was wavering on the threshold, unable to decide if it was proper for him to disturb his master in company. His hesitation reminded the Poet of the sweet *madhavi* flower vacillating on the threshold of Spring, about to blossom and yet too shy to unfold its petals. He broke out in his famous song, *Why this hesitation, O shy madhavi ?**

From a distance I had judged Rabindranath to be a poet only. After my coming here, however, I was amazed by the versatility of his genius. I found him to be as familiar with philology, the natural sciences, medicine, hygiene and nursing, as with poetry, music and art. Although there was in the asrama an old practising homeopath, it was the poet who was the real physician who prescribed. He had a large library of treatises on Homeopathy, of which he had made a thorough study. He had also given much time to the study of dietics. He was vehement in his condemnation of the waste of food-value due to bad cooking and love of spices in a country where the majority of people could hardly afford two meals a day. He once remarked : "We have to cross a stormy sea. The boat is old and worn-out, the load is heavy, and if we do not at least close up the cracks, we are done for." According to him a rational study of dietics should take into account both the taste and the nutritive value of the food stuff. His own taste, however, he has been able to train to almost anything. Once one Chintamani Shastri, who was working in the asrama, assured him that *neem* leaves were good for health. Forthwith *neem* leaves occupied the leading place in his daily menu. He always preferred to take vegetables uncooked, and has been a consistent patron of *gur* in place of sugar.

A secret of his success as an educational organiser has been his habit of always trusting others. He had as great a capacity to follow as to lead, to obey as to command. He never tried to impose his opinions on others. Even the school children had their own tribunal for judging cases of indiscipline or miscon-

* যে মাধবী ভীত মাধবী দিবা কেন ?

duct. In such matters he respected and bound himself by the innate sense of justice and fairness which children invariably show. When he entrusted anybody with a particular commission, he gave him complete freedom within the scope of the task allotted. He knew the art of inspiring others to exert their utmost by the very act of his implicit confidence in their worth.

Although the Institution was growing rapidly, there was no office properly so-called and the funds were so meagre that when the need was felt for a clerk to assist the Rector, everybody was at his wit's end. The Poet declared that he would do the clerk's job as well ; and, much to our embarrassment, he did function as such for a pretty long period, until prevailed upon with difficulty to delegate the work to one of us.

Absolute faith in the truth of his ideals has endowed him with infinite patience. There have come to the asrama from time to time persons who have had very little in common with its ideals. Even in the face of reports reaching him of their incompatibility, he would not take any drastic steps, until he had given the person in question the utmost chance of proving his worth. On one such occasion, he told us : "It so happened once that complaints were carried to my father regarding some of my unorthodox views. My father met the complaints by remarking, 'Do not be afraid. He who is all Truth will bring him back to the correct path.' I have absolute faith in the education my father had given me and in the example of his own conduct."

His love and sympathy went out to everyone who was weak and helpless. At a time when our political wiseacres were disposed to ridicule the idea of rural reconstruction, he had the courage publicly to proclaim his faith that India cannot be truly free until its villages are restored to a basis of economic and moral self-respect. He has often had to suffer for his frankness. When during the days of the first non-co-operation movement it was being preached that the schools and colleges, being strongholds

of alien culture, should be boycotted, it was he who registered his protest against exploiting the sentiments of young boys for political purposes. The amusing fact remains that those radicals who jeered at his *moderateness* are today advising the very same thing.

Once, many years ago, some non-Bengali friends complained to me that so great a principle as that of non-violence had escaped the Poet's spiritual vision. In reply I informed them that as early as 1909, long before the first Satyagraha movement was even talked of in India, the Poet had discussed and gauged the possibilities of the technique in his drama *Prayaschitta*, which was several times staged in the asrama. Dhananjoy Bairagi of the drama is presented there as a Satyagrahi of a very rigid description. I suggested to a Bengali-knowing member of the party that he might satisfy himself by reading the drama, and undertook to procure a copy for him. As the book was not available in the market just then, I remember to have got a copy from S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee. The friend was highly enthusiastic over the drama and proposed to have it translated immediately in the different Indian languages. However, for reasons best known to him, the proposal was never carried out.

Another trait that I have remarked in the character of the Poet is that, though intensely alive and sensitive to every shade of feeling, he rarely, if ever, gives way to excess of sentiment. His fortitude has been severely tested by tragic family bereavements,—of his children more have passed away than are left to him, and all in the prime of youth—but he has borne his losses with an equanimity and a calm that one associates with sages rather than with poets. This strength of soul he has derived from his assimilation of the spirit of the Upanishads. Early in life, he strove to emulate and imbibe that ideal according to which his father, the Maharshi, conducted his life and *sadhana*. Perhaps that is why he never felt drawn towards those unrestrained and extravagant forms of religious endeavour which

innundated India after the era of the Upanishads. His ideal has always been that of the rishis of the ancient forest schools, whose actions and utterances were characterised by restraint and rhythm. His teachings reveal an exquisite blend of intellectual depth and artistic sensibility, in which eastern idealism and western rationalism correct each other, the whole permeated by a spirit of balance and rhythm which are so marked a feature of the prose of the Upanishads. In his ideas, as well as in his language, he has successfully combined the charm of unsophisticated simplicity which one associates with rural life, with all the refinements of urban culture. He has never encouraged a narrow nationalism to stand in the way of acquiring the best that the West has to teach us. Like a silk worm breaking through the cocoon, he has cut through his own prejudices. In his poetic expression too he has evolved ever new forms, when the older ones have exhausted their possibilities. That is why there is such a rich variedness in his poetry and such a harmony.

In his ideal of education, meditation and service, knowledge and practical application, go hand in hand. He has sought deliverance through love and service rather than through renunciation. The finite and the infinite are for him but two aspects of the same central reality. The static aspect of *Prakriti* and the dynamic aspect of *Purusha* have been discussed at length by Sankhya and the various systems of Indian philosophy. It was left to the Poet to delineate the pathos of *Purush-Prakriti* relationship, which he conveyed through those beautiful poems, *Kach and Debjani*¹ and *I will not let thee go*. In both these poems we see *Prakriti* vainly trying to bind *Purusha* in the meshes of *maya*. The tragedy of her recurrent failure constitutes the tragedy of the universe.

His ideal woman is neither an angel above men, nor a mere bed-mate. She is well defined in the character of Chitra and again in his poem, *At Night and in the Morning*. His love of human

1. For an English translation see Vol. II Part IV of this Journal (new series).

life and of this lovely and sad earth is beautifully brought out in the poem, *Farewell to Paradise*. In his *Baisnab Kabita* he has made God the sweetheart and the sweetheart God.

So many-sided is Rabindranath's genius and so complex his personality that after thirty years of close contact I wonder how little I know him. I cannot envy the task of his future biographer. One thing, however, one can assert about him which is witnessed by his every thought, utterance and act ; and that is, that, in the words of *Aitaraya Brahmana*, "his soul is like a song". All that is beautiful and harmonious he loves, and all that is cheap and ill-formed he shrinks from. I am reminded of an interesting anecdote, narrated to me by a relation of his who was also his close friend ; and with the anecdote I will close these reminiscences:

"When Rabikaka (Uncle Rabindranath), returned from Europe, I hit upon a device of robbing him of his foreign wardrobe. Accordingly I began singing his favourite songs in my atrociously unmusical voice. This being something he could never stand, he offered me his entire wardrobe as the price for my not singing."

PEACE

George Lansbury, M. P.

WE pacifists are living through dark and very difficult times ; often the storms of bitterness, hatred and violence appear so heavy and likely to burst, bringing catastrophic disaster on all, that our minds almost fail us for fear. No one, living in the rough and tumble of life dare minimise or belittle the dangers confronting mankind. All thinking people find themselves driven to an almost fatalistic belief that all those evil forces, which we know are in the world and which find some place in us all, have been let loose wholesale for the purpose of crushing the best and the worst of the human race into chaos and confusion.

But I am writing on April 17th, two days after President Roosevelt's appeal to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini. I do not know what the result of that appeal will be. We pacifists know that, in response to our appeal on April 19th, 1937, Herr Hitler publicly declared as follows : "Germany will be *very* willing to attend a conference and take part in a united effort to establish economic and mutual understanding between the nations of the world, if President Roosevelt or the head of another great country will take the lead in calling such a conference."

This statement was broadcast throughout the world and

We are happy to give publicity to this fervent appeal for peace wrung out of a very noble heart in despair. In a demented world it is sure to fall on deaf ears. The fact that no people really desire war, though almost all are working for it, adds to the tragic intensity of an appeal for peace. In India at least, we hope, Mr. Lansbury's sincerity will be appreciated.

To us, however, it seems that if Great Britain and France, instead of pretending to be angels being harassed by German and Italian "devils", genuinely set about creating the conditions of a permanent peace by voluntarily renouncing all their ill-gotten imperial possessions, such a tremendous energy would be released in the cause of justice and freedom, and faith in human values would be generated so spontaneously, that no more appeals for peace would be needed.—*Ed.*

though we pacifists did our utmost to get a response, none has been forthcoming from Europe or the United States until the whole world is on the brink of disaster. It is not *our* policy of appeasement through conference and mutual concessions which has failed. It is appeasement plus the mailed fist which has failed. April 19th, 1937, was one of those moments in human history which real statesmanship would have grasped as the golden opportunity to start the world along the road toward peace. The effort might have failed. I am sure it would not have failed if Britain and France together with the United States had met the German Government as an equal.

But we must take the world as it is today. Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini in Europe and the Japanese in the Pacific have taken such violent action that all the world is living in a state of tension which, unless soon checked, will break up the homes and also the material resources of all the nations. In addition, the flood of racial persecution and the suppression of religious, social and political freedom has reached a point when over large portions of the world the word *freedom* has no meaning whatsoever. The result of all this is that we "pacifists" are once again forced to stand alone. But in our overriding faith that in taking our stand against all part or lot in the work of trying to destroy evil by more evil, we are guided, strengthened and maintained by the faith that we are at least striving to follow the best we know, and we have the conviction that it is not God or Goodness which has turned this world into a mad-house, but the refusal of men to believe that in the affairs of life it is only possible to reap what we sow.

All that has happened in this world since the dawn of history till to-day bears eloquent testimony to the fact that power, wealth and great possessions owned individually and nationally never have and never can give the owners or their neighbours peace. Central Europe and Britain smashed the power of France at Waterloo. Prussia became the German Empire in 1871, and Britain, France and Russia co-operated together and fifty years later smashed the

power of the new German Empire, only to make certain that, despite every effort to keep them down, the German nation is once again feared and she has brought to her side, as ally, the Italian nation which, during the years which ended in November, 1918, helped smash the German armies.

If we could imagine a similar ending to another great war, who dares to say the results will be any better? No, it is not possible. Another universal war means no victors, all losers. We cannot build a new world out of universal ruin. I will not pursue that argument except to say all past history is a record of one force being replaced by another, until to-day when knowledge is more widespread and science and invention have given us the means of the fullest life mankind has dreamed of, good men and women, some of them much more self-sacrificing than many of us, are willing to risk everything in another effort to save civilisation by force. So, my comrades, although our pathway seems, and really is, strewn with huge boulders of difficulty, let us cast our cares on Almighty God. It is not in our power ourselves to redeem mankind. We are unable to preserve our own lives or our own faith unless that faith is built on the "Eternal Rock" of truth which our lives and our thoughts come from. Within ourselves, we are able to reach out, in thought, to the Infinite and find strength to follow the light of Truth wherever it may lead us. At this hour, when it appears that only a miracle can save us from destruction, let us believe and continue to believe the "miracle" will and shall happen. Goodness has never yet been crushed. Often it has been overborne, but it has still raised its head, proclaiming the truth, *Hatred is Death, Love is Life*. Who knows, perhaps, we are being brought to the brink of human disaster so as to bring us all to God? May it not be that this is the Day for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth? Never be blinded by what is only momentarily visible. There is, I am certain, more love, more understanding, more goodwill among ordinary people in all lands than ever before. Surely this will be heard in Germany,

Italy, France, Britain and elsewhere. I know ever so painfully that all I am saying is only words. But how else can we express our faith ? To you who read this and among the prisoners, captives and persecuted ones in the world, I can send love and a prayer. May God cheer and comfort you and your faith never fail you. Although I find the task difficult, my mind will not believe war will come. On the contrary, it continues to insist that peace must and will come : and it will not come merely because war is bestial and horrible, but because it is futile, useless madness which accomplishes nothing at all ; and war is all this because it is a denial of morals, religion and everything else which makes for human happiness. The Law of Life, *Do to one another as you would be done unto*, is not a pious platitude : it is a realistic truth, as our own personal lives prove as well as our national life.

It has been said, God is waiting for the people who will be good enough to enter and inhabit the promised land. I think of the Universe as the promised land, and us men and women as children, who have not yet grown up. Out of the Past has come much wisdom and knowledge ; as yet little understanding.

Perhaps out of the storm of lies and bitterness, hatred and deceit, a new generation will arise with such understanding as will enable a new civilisation to be born, perhaps after much sorrow, pain and anguish, but all the same a new life based upon the grand conception that to be happy, to be peaceful, we must love God whom we have not seen, and our neighbour whom we do see as ourselves.

ART AND DAILY LIFE

Benodebehari Mukherjee

THE present art movement in our country has not yet been able to penetrate the mind of the vast body of our masses. For various reasons our art activities have influenced very little the life of our people, though no doubt they have stimulated the intellectual side of our taste. Yet the people of our country were not so very indifferent to their surroundings as late as fifty years ago. The relation of art to daily life was more natural. At all times, and for all of their requirements, necessities or luxuries, the people drew on the resources of our craftsmen. These craftsmen who produced the beautiful objects, now, alas, gradually becoming "curios", not only reveal their individual genius but also reflect the taste of the people of that period and place.

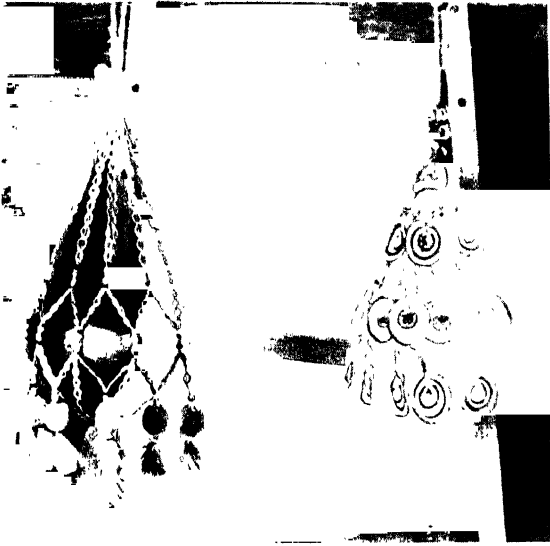
There are innumerable such specimens in our country which bear evidence of the skill of our artists. However, in these short notes we are concerned, not with the contributions of individual artists, but with the life of the people in so far as it reveals a real desire for the beautiful. From this point of view, a study of the village life will be more interesting and more useful, inasmuch as it still retains some of its old culture and conventions. In Bengal, as no doubt in the other parts of India as well, we may yet trace in a village home the desire for beautiful surroundings. There was room for creative expression in almost every little activity or routine of daily life. Even the bare necessities and things of ephemeral use were decorated with care and taste. The *kantha* (quilted coverlet decorated with coloured thread), for example, is today famous for its simple beauty and design. But these *kanthas* were once the common things of daily use, and served the purpose of bed covers, wrappers, etc. Then there is *shika* (a hanging shelf woven of rope, and used for keeping various things out of

reach of the unwelcome, four-footed intruders), a very serviceable article and so pretty that it might be suspended only for its decorative effect. One can enumerate many such articles, utensils, sweetmeat moulds, etc., things of beauty, now being replaced by cheap, imported factory products. Paper stencilling, painting in various forms and on various things was a kind of recreation and accomplishment of a house-wife.

But the largest scope for the display of the people's creative faculties was provided by the marriage festivals, ceremonies such as *Brata*, etc. These ceremonies, whatever their religious merit, played a very significant part in the aesthetic training of those who took part in them. *Alpana*, a most beautiful form of floor decoration was evolved in association with these ceremonies, as perhaps also were many of the innumerable dolls of Bengal. A complete process of *Brata* ceremony from beginning to end is a training in itself. Similarly, marriage ceremonies, with their elaborate social conventions and rituals used to provide considerable room for the exercise of individual artistic skill. Trained hands used to be busy in decorating almost everything of use in the ceremony. Though most of these things had no permanent use or life, their lack of utility or of commercial value did not discourage the people's overflow of aesthetic delight.

I have been able to mention here only a few of those articles which are peculiar to, and more or less typical of, the village home. Many of these things were the product of lay artists rather than of the paid professionals. They were mostly made of easily accessible material, like used or torn cloth, rope, cane, grass, coconut and conch shells, etc. The material cost to the makers was almost nothing. These things which were once so much a part of the daily life of our folks and which imparted to it grace, colour and character, are today, alas, becoming a subject for the research student. Perhaps it is not impossible even now to save some of these lingering arts from being totally lost.

Of the many difficulties that stand in the way of a genuine cultural interest in these humble arts, one is that we cannot think



Specimens of *Shuka* (hanging rope-shell)



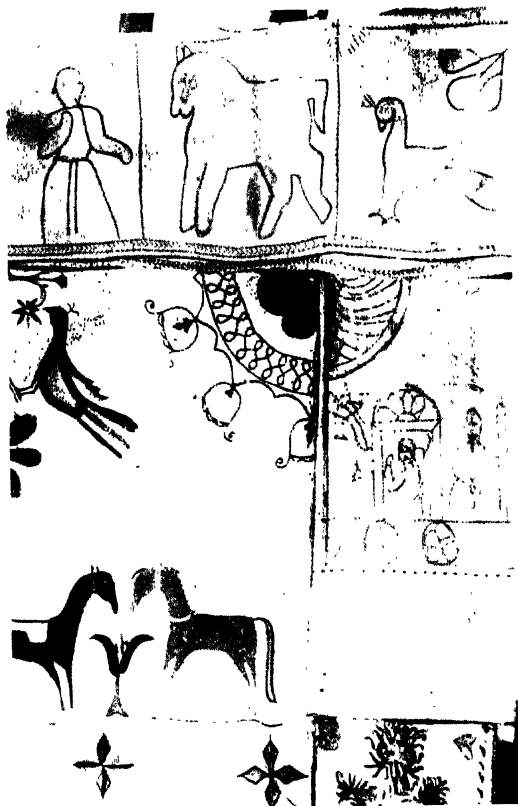
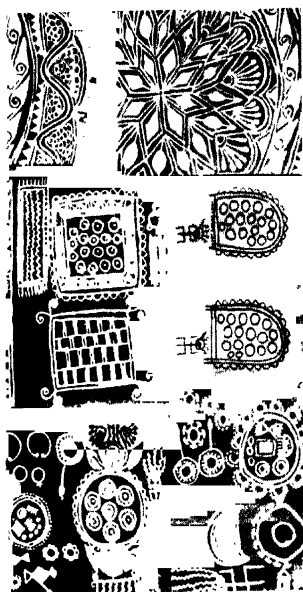
Folk painting (coloured)-Kalighat, C



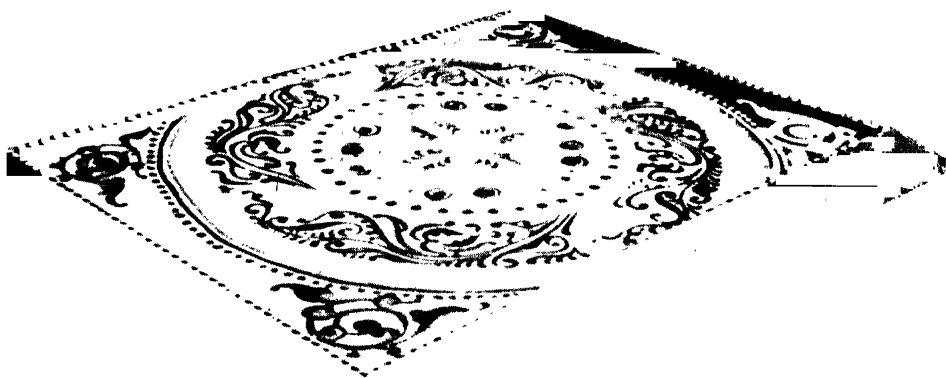
Specimens of sweetmeat moulds



Line drawing—Kalighat, Cal



Specimen of Kantha



Alpana (modern type--Santiniketan)

of artistic worth independently of money. If we come across specimens of these arts in their true setting we ignore them, until they are brought to our sophisticated notice as curios in a museum glass-case. And then we pretend to admire them, but never enjoy them.

An interesting example of one of these decorative domestic arts being consciously revived is *Alpana*. It is mostly due to the influence of Rabindranath Tagore that people in Bengal began to take an intelligent interest in their cultural and aesthetic traditions. Abanindranath Tagore's valuable book on *Alpana* was the first of its kind and was largely responsible for the present popular interest in this art of floor-decoration. The book contains a valuable collection of the different examples of this art.

Unfortunately, however, our modern city houses, encumbered with carpets and heavy furniture, give little scope for the practical use of *alpana*. Mere intellectual interest in the art could hardly have sufficed to help it survive. It was therefore fortunate that the artists at Santiniketan took up its study in seriousness and made use of it in the many ceremonies and festivals which are so frequent a part of the life in the asrama. Naturally, in the hands of conscious artists, the old style has undergone great changes. A discerning eye should be able to perceive them in the example given along with this article of both the old and new forms. The older form is simpler and more spontaneous, while the new one is complex and more intellectual.

A word of warning may perhaps be necessary. In our conscious advocacy of the dying village arts and our attempt to resuscitate or re-introduce them, we must not be carried away by the fond utopian dream of keeping the village art pure in the setting of our modern life. That is the way of national sentimentalists who only kill the art more effectively by turning it into an incongruous artificiality. We have to recognise the unpleasant truth that good things too may die a natural death. An art to live must have the necessary social conditions for its life. It cannot live in the mere will of its patrons. If our life as a whole

has become or is becoming more complex and more intellectual, we cannot hope to avoid these traits in our arts. The ideal should be to make the best of the heritage of tradition and not necessarily to preserve it like Egyptian mummies.

How long any of the lingering village arts, or even the revived art of *alpana*, would continue, depends upon their successful adaptation to the new conditions of life. It may be that, as floor-decoration, *alpana* will not survive long, but even then its present study and revival will have done considerable good by its influence on modern decorative art in general. The new simplicity and a kind of surface quality which our best modern designs show is partly to be traced to the influence of *alpana*. At least in this sense, and to this extent, a study of our traditional arts would be of value to our artists.

WORDS AS SOUNDS

T. H. Advani M. A. (CANTAB)

LANGUAGE, which consists of words, and is used by all human beings except the dumb, ordinarily receives attention only from those who practise the art of letters or who are engaged in teaching that art. The average person, the man in the street, by which I do not mean the uneducated and the uncultured only, treats language as merely a means of communication, which no doubt it originally was. Words, however, have a definite sound-value inherent in them, because all words are after all nothing but sounds, and their sound-value is quite independent of the meaning or ideas they convey. Take the word "Om", for instance. I do not know what its spiritual value is, but if anybody questions its sound-appeal, or thinks that considered as mere sound, it is not more pleasing to the ear than "Um" or "Im", there is something definitely wrong with his two-ear receiving set. That this superior sound-value of the word "Om" is independent of its meaning and the associations it has for the Hindu mind can easily be tested by referring the sound to non-Hindu ears. Perhaps it is true that human ears require some, if not as much, training as human voice does. The little child is taught how to speak but not how to listen, because ears are supposed to function without assistance, and for most practical purposes they do, as theirs is a passive function. But it is only when the ear, with constant alertness, has learnt to detect verbal harmonies that it is possible to read silently what is written on the printed page and discover its full sound-value without any effort.

I must make it clear at the outset that though the title of this paper is general, my study of the subject is based chiefly, though not entirely, on an analysis of English words. I shall try to illustrate my remarks by considering some Indian words also, and show that our analysis of English words is not without

a lesson in respect of our vernaculars ; but most of the illustrative passages will be taken from English prose and poetry.

Now, words as sounds may be sweet or harsh, and, though the harsh word may be necessary sometimes, it remains harsh all the same. Let me first take some simple words, both English and Indian. Compare the word "bone" with its Hindusthani equivalent "huddi" (हड्डी). The English word as a sound is undeniably superior. The words "my" and "mine" (themselves not equally sweet) may be compared with our equivalents "mori" (मोरी) and "hamari" (हमारी). Here the Indian words are better than "my" at least. How does the word "mad" compare with "mastana" (मस्ताना), "devana" (दीवाना), and the word "God" with "Ram" (राम), "Narayana" (नारायण), "Om" (ओम्), "Akal" (अकाल) ? Now just as "mori", "mastana" and "Ram" are more pleasing to the ear than "my", "mad" and "God" respectively, so our various equivalents for these will be found to differ from one another in their sound-appeal. The Indian words chosen are highly pleasing to the ear, but even so "Om" is better than "Ram", "Narayana" than "Om" and "Akal". The reason will be clear when we come to examine the sources of verbal music. For the present my purpose is to convince the reader that all words have a sound-value as they have a sense-value, in which aim I hope I have not failed. And now let us take a word that will help us in our analysis : the word "incarnadine", coined by Shakespeare in *Macbeth*. No one can deny that its sound is pleasing to the ear. For the same idea we could use the word "redden", which, as a sound is infinitely inferior. Let me quote the passage in which it occurs. *Macbeth* has murdered the king, and hears a knocking. Then he says :

How is't with me, when every noise appals me ?
 What hands are here ? ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !
 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand ? No ; this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red.

Substitute the word "red-den" for "incarnadine", ignoring for a while the requirements of metre, and it plays havoc with the music of the line. If we pronounce the word "incarnadine" a few times we find that we like its sound chiefly because of its two long vowels—the "ah" in "car", and the "i" in "dine". Not all of its musical effect, however, is derived from its long vowels, for note the effect of the repetition of the consonant "n". If we examine our own word "Narayana" we find the long "ah's" and the repeated "n" pleasing. Here in a nutshell are the two chief sources of verbal music—long vowels and the recurrence of consonants, long vowels being the more important of the two. Consonants are the clothing of vowels, the body; vowels are the soul of consonants. As the body, however beautiful, is worthless without the animating spirit, so consonants, however sweet, are useless without vowels. Vowels may be well-clothed or ill-clothed, but if they are themselves strong, their clothes, the consonants, do not matter so much. But a harmonious combination of the two naturally gives the best results.

We have so far considered only single words, which give us no idea of the intricate harmonies that can dwell in words in a sequence. Consider the sublime passage from the Bible :

Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord
is risen upon thee.

Note the effect of the three "i's" following one another, and these followed by the glorious "o's", and of the three "r's" in the second half of the sentence.

On the value of the long vowel it is hardly necessary, after this example, to say anything further. The recurrence of consonants, however, must be distinguished from the cheap device of alliteration, which is the repetition of initial letters in accented syllables. What we have been considering is the recurrence of consonants anywhere in a word or sentence, and recurrence not only of consonants but of vowels also, In Stevenson's :

Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
The hunter home from the hill,

the alliteration is quite pleasing but the sound of "h" repeated so many times comes hammering on the ears and is therefore too obtrusively euphonious. Softer harmonies are obtained from consonants less vigorously repeated. Many examples of this gentler repetition can be given. There is Shelley's :

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

in which the subtle effect of so many "m's" and "l's" and "r's" can be easily contrasted with that of the "h's" in the lines from Stevenson.

Let me now quote a few passages from English prose and poetry in which these sound-effects are most prominent. Here is a passage from Jeremy Taylor, describing the flight of a lark through a storm :

And then it made a prosperous flight and did rise
and sing as if it had learned music and motion as he passed
sometimes through the air about his ministries here below.

A passage like this requires no comment or analysis. The dullest ear could not miss the long vowels in it. Their variety and the changes in the rhythm of the sentence give to the passage a marked and highly pleasing vocal pattern. The following passage from T. S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral* is an exquisite example of both vowel-consonant music and ordinary rhythm :

Since golden October declined into sombre November,
And the apples were gathered and stored, and the land
became brown sharp points of death in a waste of
water and mud.

But perhaps the best lines in poetry known to me for musical effect are the last lines of Shelley's *Ozymandias* :

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
 And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed ;
 And on the pedestal these words appear :
 'My name is Ozmandias, king of kings :
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Note the tremendous effect, in the last two lines, of "bound" and "bare" and "lone", followed without any pause, first by a number of short vowels and then by the long ones in "far away"—all together suggesting the vast expanse of the desert, "boundless and bare, the lone and level sands far away", in fact. This is sound suggesting sense not onomatopoeically, but through an arrangement (not necessarily conscious) of certain long vowels and consonants, a point I shall touch later.

The following passage is from Ruskin, describing the life of some peasants.

(They have) no books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest ;
 except only sometimes a little sitting in the sun under the church wall
as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air.

In the sentence italicised the musical effect is also partly derived from its rhythmical movement. But though rhythm does enhance the musical effect of a sentence, it does not itself constitute verbal music, which, as the name itself suggests, must spring from the words themselves. I shall illustrate my point. An excellent example of rhythmic prose is Tagore's :

I run as a musk deer runs in the shadow of the forest mad with
 his own perfume (*The Gardner*),

which through its rhythm imitates the musk-deer's running hither and thither through the forest. But a poem like this is almost metrical and derives its effect chiefly from an element properly belonging to poetry. It thus encroaches on poetry, and is not properly speaking prose, even though it should lack rhyme. Compare this piece with the passage from the Bible :

Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

This passage has both rhythm and verbal music. Its rhythm, like the rhythm of Tagore's poem, is on the surface. But what a galaxy we have here of the long vowels ! Three long "i's", with their "clarion sound" follow one another, and are "contrasted in their strongest and most euphonious manner with the long 'o's' of 'Glory of the Lord !'" (Saintsbury). I could quote many more passages. Saintsbury's *History of English Prose Rhythm*, from which I have taken a few myself, is full of them. But I shall mention only one more English passage which will illustrate an additional remark I shall have to make in regard to the source of music in language. Besides, the passage itself is of a delightful sound-value. The reader must have seen a juggler playing with a number of balls, which he throws up one after the other and dexterously catches in a variety of ways. In the following passage De Quincey is found playing in the same fashion with verbal sounds and rhythms most cunningly and without doubt consciously :

Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, uprises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June ; or if I think for a moment of the rose in June, uprises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June ; then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus, *roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses*, without end, thick as blossoms in Paradise.

. The beauty of the whole lies chiefly in its external rhythm, but the ear at once seizes upon the exquisite "*roses and Fannies*,

Fannies and roses," with its lovely reverse-repetition and beautiful "roses" first and "roses" last. Let us tamper with the order of these words and say instead "Fannies and roses, roses and Fannies". Very pleasing still, and yet not so pleasing as "roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses", because the long "o's" at the beginning and end sound better than when placed in juxtaposition in the middle. Coming at the end its sound not only lingers in the ear but also reminds of the opening "o". In the middle, followed by other sounds, the "o's" are almost forgotten. What is the conclusion? That different *arrangements of the vowels* give us different effects, and these, with five long vowels and so many agreeable consonants in different permutations and combinations, will give us an infinite variety. And always it is necessary in writing to look after one's vowels and arrange them well, after testing their values in different arrangements, not sacrificing sense or grammar, keeping the ear constantly alert. "Look after your vowels and your consonants will look after themselves," is a sound motto for a writer to remember. If the phrase from De Quincey is not enough to bring out my point, let us take a simpler example, a name. There is a play by James Barrie, *Mary Rose*. Let us take this name and analyse its sound. Pronounce it several times, and note the effect of the repeated "r" followed by the "o". It is a name fit to be chanted. If we reverse the words and say *Rose Mary*, we ruin the effect by altering the arrangement of the vowels and consonants. So, it is not only long vowels and the recurrence of consonants but also how we arrange these that will determine their music. But I must not forget to apply these simple principles to a passage or two from an Indian language—Punjabi. I am indebted to Prof. Mohan Singh for the following verses from Bhai Vir Singh's poetry :—

Sābhan lālā dhōtā kōlā, •
Dudh daheen vich pāyā ;¹

1 साबन लाला धोता कोला, दध दहीँ बिच पाया ।

Khumb châr rangan bhē dhariâ,
Rang na ōs vatâya.¹

My ear tells me that the first verse, musically, is far superior to the second, and the reason is obvious—the presence of the “ah’s” and “o’s”, and the recurrence of the liquid “l”. Except in “os vataya” at the end, the second verse is destitute of the long vowel. At the same time the second half of the first verse is somewhat marred by the stammering effect produced by the three “d” sounds coming so close upon one another, showing that their arrangement is defective. Another example from the same poet is :—

Ave dhōlâ darsa dikhâve
Dēd asâdi chōlē pāve.²

Note in this the distribution and identical placing of “ah”, “o”, “ah” in each hemistich, and “dhola” (ढोला) in the first varied with “chole” (चोली) in the second, that is, “la” (ला) with “le” (ली). And the four soft “d’s”, because they are well distributed, here add to the effect. All this naturally contributes to the total sound effect, though I do not for a moment suggest that the poet aimed at it at the time of writing. Such writing is always the result of true inspiration, supplemented of course by deliberate chiselling here and there.

We have now reached a point when we can usefully discuss an interesting problem connected with the music of words, or, loosely speaking, with rhythm. There is one opinion which makes the achievement of rhythm dependent upon the quality of the subject matter. Choose a grand theme, say the holders of this opinion, and rhythm and musical sound are bound to follow. This view is certainly erroneous, and Saintsbury, in the *History*

1 खुम्भ चार रङ्गण भी धरिया,
रङ्ग न ओस वेटाया ॥

2 आवे ढोला दरस दिखावे,
दीद असादि चोली पावे ।

of *English Prose Rhythm*, has convincingly shown it to be erroneous. He has compared phrase by phrase the entire Bible passage, from which I have quoted above, with two earlier translations, and shown that although the subject of all the three was the same, the passage of the Authorised Version alone achieved grandeur of expression. This proves conclusively that the subject is not one tiny bit as important as the writer. Everything depends on the writer, not on the subject. The other view held is that rhythm and music are not so much inherent in language as projected into it by the emotion aroused in the mind of the reader by the meaning. Dr. Richards of Cambridge expresses this view in his book *Practical Criticism* as under:

... the apprehension of poetic rhythm is only partly an affair of the ear, ... the rhythm which we admire, which we seem to detect actually *in* the sounds, and which we seem to respond to, is something which we only ascribe to them and is, actually, a rhythm of the mental activity through which we apprehend not only the sound of the words but their sense and feeling. The mysterious glory which seems to inhere in the sound of certain lines is a projection of the thought and emotion they evoke, and the peculiar satisfaction they seem to give *to the ear* is a reflection of the adjustment *of our feelings* which has been momentarily achieved.

This view of Richards is based on experiments he made in practical criticism with Cambridge undergraduates, in one of which a simple poem brought forth two sharply opposing estimates of its idea and rhythm. From this fact Richards deduces his "projection" theory. The experiment, however, on account of the quality of the poem, does not provide the conclusive proof that he imagines it does. The theme (love), its treatment, and the rhythm are all of such a simple nature that all three must, according to the reader's temperament, stand or fall together. Why did not the same thing happen in the case of any of the other poems he has experimented with? How many of his students while baffled by the meaning of some of the other poems or even vehemently disagreeing with the idea have praised their

rhythm and music ? Why not judge by the results of these other experiments also ? In my opinion all that his experiment can justifiably be said to prove is that sympathy with the meaning may sometimes be necessary for the *perception* of rhythm which may be inherent in expression. The other possibilities are not being ruled out. You may see rhythm when it is not there (because you like the idea), you may not see the rhythm when it is there (because you dislike the idea). But it is equally possible that you may see the rhythm when it is there (whether you like the idea or not), or that you may not see any rhythm when it is not there (even if you like the idea). It is true that if the emotional response excited by the sense is not adequate, or if a reader is out of sympathy with the author's meaning, with what he has to say, he may not (and yet he may) receive the accompanying rhythm in the right way. But the existence of the rhythm independently of the meaning cannot therefore be questioned. A perception of it may sometimes depend upon a sympathy with the thought embodied in the words, but it cannot be said that moved by the beauty of the thought the reader's mind has "projected" into the words a music which they do not really possess. A difference of opinion is permissible in regard to the process of discovery of the rhythm but not on its possible existence in the words themselves, quite independently of their meaning. That rhythm may be there and not perceived, or perceived where none exists, argues a defect in the reader. But its perception *after* a sympathy with the meaning does not establish the theory that the rhythm is either dependent upon or projected by the meaning. Sense and emotion then only enable the ear to discover the rhythm in a sequence of words. Sense by suggesting the necessary pauses will help to reveal the rhythm. It will also by its own beauty increase the *appreciation* of the rhythm, but it cannot add to that rhythm, because it is made up purely of a combination of sounds.

Another test applied by Richards to prove his theory is equally defective. He takes a short passage from Milton, a

“recognised masterpiece of poetic rhythm”, changes all the consonants, retaining only the vowel sounds, so that the words become meaningless, and asks us to discover its rhythm and music. This test is so grossly lop-sided that it is a wonder a critic of Richards’ acumen has regarded it as a test at all. I have in the earlier part of my Paper shown that consonants are an important constituent of verbal music, even though less important than vowels. Besides, since English vowels do not possess a fixed sound-value, one does not know how to pronounce the substituted clusters of consonants and vowels. The eyes are confronted by such awful-looking words as “awersey”, “owds-wown”, “aswetsen”, which stand for Milton’s “mercy”, “clouds down” and “as at some”. But whenever one is able to pronounce the vowels as in Milton their sound-value is not at all destroyed. How can it be? At one place Richards has actually bettered Milton by substituting “lithabian” for “with radiant”, which proves that meaning has nothing whatever to do with the *creation* of sound-beauty. So, I am afraid, by his own test Richards rather disproves his theory.

A third test suggested by him is not a little funny—funny not only in itself but also because it is purely imaginary and yet he ascribes to it “practical importance”. We are asked to “imagine ourselves reciting verses into the ear of an instrument designed to record (by curves drawn on squared paper) all the physical characters of the sequences of sounds emitted, their strength, pitch, durations,” etc. “Now,” he goes on to say, “the view objected to would lead us to conclude that verses which are good poetry would show *some* peculiarity in their curves, that verses which are bad poetry could not show. Put in this manner, it will be agreed, that the conclusion is most unpalatable.” This, I must say, is a curious conclusion, and how he draws it, I don’t know. The experiment is to be purely imaginary, the conclusion, without any actual results, is nothing but an assumption. He assumes that there will be no difference in the curves, because in both cases he will recite verses with the same vowel-sounds. So

far so good. But if the instrument is to record vowel-sounds why should it not also record the effects of the consonants? And if the curves remain the same it will only prove my contention—that vowel-sounds even in the inferior or meaningless passage will not lose their sound-value. If, on the other hand, consonant effects are also recorded, the direction of the curves will remain the same but their composition is bound to vary, that is, there will not be just plain curves, because we must make room in those curves for the physical equivalents of the consonant-sounds, the curves themselves representing only the vowel values. So that, by this imaginary test also, Richards only proves the opposite theory. And, anyhow, I prefer judging by ears to judging by curves on squared paper. I think the “subject” theory, the notion that a lofty subject will result in lofty expression, is at least less foolish, inasmuch as it does not deny the independent existence of music in words, which are made up of nothing but sounds. It is, however, good to find that even Richards concedes the point that actual sounds are at least the “skeleton”.

So far, I have only tried to negative Richards’ evidence. Let me mention positive reason in support of the view I have put forward. Some years ago Prof. Jodh Singh delivered a lecture on Bhai Vir Singh’s poetry. Now I confess that I understood his lecture perhaps not half as well as I liked it, considering that I did not then understand the Punjabi language so well. I still remember that my very first impression was one of wide-eyed surprise. I had not dreamed before that the Punjabi language could be as supple and musical as it appeared to be from Bhai Vir Singh’s poetry. If a stranger’s ears, ignorant of this language, could without understanding their total meaning be pleased by the sound-effects of many of the recited verses, it follows that sense has no part whatever in the *creation* of sound-beauties of words. Any one can go through a similar test and satisfy himself on this point. While listening to a speech in a foreign language, if his ear catches phrases or words or

syllables which please his ears (as some are bound to) he will find on analysis that they contain long vowels and sweet or vigorous consonants singly or in recurrence. We can also take familiar words singly or in combination, embodying meaning which arouses no emotion whatever, or, better still, which excites an unpleasant feeling, and see how the ears judge. The word "coal" in English and its equivalent in Hindustani "koela" (कोयला) stand perhaps for one of the least romantic objects in the world, and yet they please the ear more than "kal" (कल) meaning "yesterday". If I had taken the Indian words, "koel" (कोयल) meaning "cuckoo," and "Akal" (अकाल) meaning "deathless," the romantic and spiritual associations respectively of these words might have justified their exclusion. No such objection can be brought against "coal", and if it is agreed that it is more pleasant than "kal", what is it due to but the presence of the long "o" in "coal"? The word "knife" in English is "coltello" in Italian. Which is better as a sound and why ? What emotional value has the article "knife"? "Exit" in English is "ushita" in Italian ? If "ushita" sounds like a pretty Indian name (which most decidedly is not the reason why I like it) let us take the name of a Christian Saint, "Saint Mark" in English, "San Marco" in Italian. If religious feeling projects music in "San Marco", why does it not project it equally in "Saint Mark"? If an Italian came to your door and said, "E molto fame" and you did not understand him, and if he explained to you by gestures his meaning, which is, "I am very hungry", and if you had ears sensitive to verbal harmonies, I have no doubt but that you would ask him to say those words in Italian again, and you would pronounce them three or four times with keen pleasure, and remark, "By Jove ! How much more pleasing than 'I am very hungry !' " And then I am sure you would give him a first class dinner. Not because there is anything romantic about being hungry in Italian but because the "m's", the "o", the "ah" and the "I" are there. Well, what else can it be ? The fact from which we cannot get away is that

each vowel-sound, unaccompanied by any consonant, has its own peculiar value, this much at least being quite certain that the sound in "hate" (the meaning of which has nothing to recommend it) is more pleasing than the vowel-sound in "hat". Similarly each consonant has its own peculiar sound-value, and it is vowels and consonants of which a word is made, and according as the vowels and consonants are pleasing or otherwise, the word will be pleasing or otherwise too. And if single words are admitted to have a sound-value independently of the ideas or objects they stand for, how can they be denied the same independent value when they appear in a sequence ? I have laboured this point at such length because I find disagreement with this view and sometimes just uncertainty of opinion among friends with whom I have discussed the subject. To those who can easily detach their aural sense from the control of the intellect, and who can quickly grasp, before meaning has had time to reach the intellect, the sound-values of words, this quarrel must seem both futile and strange.

Having made so much of the sound aspect of words in language, I may have given the impression that I consider sound more important than sense, which is not at all the case. Language is primarily meant to convey ideas, and so sense necessarily comes first. What a poet or prose-writer has to say is, of course, of infinitely greater importance, and strong emotion often finds expression in verse which is far from mellifluous, but verbal music is not only of the mellifluous kind. The first two stanzas of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* have wonderful trumpet-like word-music, achieved with long vowels and hard-hitting consonants, so it is a mistake to regard verbal music as something sweet and soft only. But of whatever kind it may be, it is a fine accompaniment when appropriate to subject. I emphasise this aspect of words because, in my opinion, a good deal of the effect of poetry and prose in any language proceeds from this quality. That is what is commonly ignored, with the result that few of us, when writing, deliberately

aim at so rendering our thought as to become not only exact and intelligible but musical at the same time. And if we are to enrich our vernaculars these sound-effects should not be neglected. My purpose in writing this Paper was not to sing the praises of the English language which we can never, perhaps, completely master, because the English language with its idiosyncracies is a very difficult language. But while we may be well advised to use our own vernaculars for all literary efforts, we would be ill-advised to despise English, because, it is an excellent means of communication with the outside world, and the Indian's handling of it is something unique. Besides, as I have already said, some of the principles governing its beauty, have a practical lesson for our vernaculars.

GANDHIJI ON MACHINES*

Nirmal Kumar Bose

THERE are all kinds of superstitions regarding Gandhiji's economic ideas. Some believe that he is against all machinery as such, others believe that he sticks exactly to the opinions which he held long ago with regard to machines and industrial organizations. And both write against Gandhiji without turning over the pages of *Young India* or more easily available books where the development of his ideas is historically recorded. It is unfortunate that even eminent scientists have indulged in such pastimes, although they themselves would refuse to listen to another scientist who was not perfectly up-to-date with regard to his information. As if, it is not necessary to be scientific when one is dealing with an unscientific subject like Gandhiji or his ideas.

It is because things like this are constantly happening round us that we consider the present book a very timely publication. It contains twenty-six articles of Gandhiji written between July, 1934, and February, 1938, and seventeen more by Mahadev Desai, J. C. Kumarappa and others, relating to some economic questions connected with rural India. Personally, Gandhiji is committed to certain definite economic opinions embodied partly in the two organizations with which he is closely connected : the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries' Association. Some have considered these organizations to be of a reactionary character, holding that they set back the clock instead of leading India towards further industrialization which is her inevitable goal. We should, therefore, acquaint ourselves fully with the why and wherefore of these two movements before coming to any final opinion regarding them. And in this task, the present book will be of great help to us.

* Being a review of *Cent-per-cent Swadeshi or The Economics of Village Industries* (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad). The importance of the subject matter might justify its inclusion among the articles.—Ed.

On reading the articles carefully, we find that in Gandhiji's mind, there is no fear of the machine as such, but only of the present industrial system, which can be considered quite apart from the machines which it employs (p. 125). In the industrial system, Gandhiji thinks, man has been made subservient to machines. It is not man whose needs dictate what should be produced, but machines which dictate how much goods should be produced, so that they might be run with profit to the owner (p. 139). In the last analysis it appears that the present industrial system has formed a league with certain dark powers which reside within the human breast, namely, greed and selfishness, cruelty and a lack of love for human beings—and these together have brought and are bringing about exploitation of mankind. It is this state of affairs that Gandhiji wishes to combat in order to restore man to his rightful place in the scheme of affairs. Man should be the master of machines and not machines that of man. It is this idea which lies behind his economic programme ; and if man becomes the master, he does not mind how much of machinery he uses. In fact, he would welcome all improvements which lighten human labour, that is, are of proved human good. The question was asked him, "But what about the great inventions ? You would have nothing to do with electricity ?" He answered, "Who said so ? If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do ? Will you give them work, or would you have their owners cut them down for want of work ?

"I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphixiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State

and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many" (pp. 125-6).

There is one thing more which strikes us as very significant in the articles under review. Socialists agree with Gandhiji so far as the human question is concerned. They also wish to restore man to his mastery over machines. They also wish machines to be driven by love and not by selfishness, greed and cruelty as at present. But their means of bringing about the transformation are different. They hold that the State should be captured first of all by the working classes before machines can be run for human welfare instead of for capitalist gain. That implies that every one should concentrate in bringing about the political revolution before anything else can be undertaken. Socialists, therefore, look upon Gandhiji's economic programme as a reactionary step which is likely to sidetrack the coming revolution.

But a careful study of Gandhiji's articles leaves a different impression upon our mind. He does not rate the State as highly as his critics do. At bottom he is a philosophical anarchist, who, however, believes in the minimum existence of the State as a practical necessity. But he values voluntary endeavour more than anything else. To him a good life based upon voluntary effort is better than a good life formed under compulsion of the State. The former is true and stays, the latter is untrue and does not stay long. Gandhiji believes that much can be done by voluntary effort, though all cannot be done in that way. For that, we would require the power of the State in our hands. But that is no reason why we should neglect doing what can be done right now (p. 63). If we believe in an economic morality which looks upon all exploitation as wrong, why should we not start building our lives accordingly from the present moment ?

In this work of human reconstruction, we should leave

politics alone. This is work in which many can join, while politics can have an appeal to a limited few. Even if it be for the sake of efficiency, we ought to keep political and national reconstruction apart from one another. Otherwise, "it would defeat the very end that I have in view. I want the material and moral growth of the villages for itself; and if it is achieved, it would be full satisfaction of my ambition. Similarly, if ever I should have to organise civil disobedience, it would be organised independently of any other activity" (p. 53). But who can deny that if the inhabitants of rural India are better organized and some life instilled into their starving bodies, if they learn self-help and the art of carrying on the work of big organizations by themselves, they will exercise a great influence over India's political future?

But we must remember with Gandhiji that politics and the State should not be turned into a fetish, the State should not occupy the position of a god before whom the citizen surrenders absolutely his individuality in the faith that in its turn it will nourish him and protect him. Politics are only a part of our lives, and the State may not absorb or direct more than a part of our being. Above all lies the influence of the individual in all matters of human progress. If the State seems to function, it is because the individual consciously or unconsciously co-operates with it. It is in this appreciation of the active aspect of human life in place of the passive one, that the chief difference between Gandhiji and the Socialists lies. In essence Gandhiji's position is like that of a Vedantist who holds that *Daiva* is no more than the accumulation of past *Parushakaras*, and that any day an active *Purushakara* can overcome the influence of centuries of *Daiva*. It is thoughts of this kind which come to us as we cross page after page of the present book.

We therefore recommend it wholeheartedly to those who would understand Gandhiji whether with a view to working with him or against him. To both the book will prove helpful.

Our thanks are also due to the publishers for having brought

it out in due season. We would, however, request them to follow it up with a further collection of Gandhiji's earlier articles on the same subject from the files of *Young India* or books like *Hind-Swaraj* or *From Yeravda Mandir*. That will help the public to appreciate Gandhiji's constructive efforts in a better fashion, as well as help towards a fuller understanding of Gandhiji himself which is necessary if we are to carry Satyagraha to a victorious issue when he is no longer with us. There is great danger of Gandhiji's ideas degenerating into a creed with "Gandhi-ites" if the intellect and *vicbara*, in the vedantic sense, are not kept alive. And in such a collected edition we would request them to include such admirable articles as "Co-operation" (3. 11. 21), "A Morning with Gandhiji" (13. 11. 24 and 20. 11. 24), "To American Friends" (17. 9. 25), "The Same Old Argument" (7. 10. 26), "London Letter" (22. 10. 31).

THE MOUNTAINS

Balloon Dhingra

THEY are the tombs
of the dead Titans who of old,
in the hot youth of the world, rebelled :
rose up against the universal dooms
of likeness and equality,
against the Master that would mould
all Life's variety
into one smooth monotony.

They rose :
they lifted up the need of their own soul ;
and, in the pride of heart,
scorning the ampler purpose of the whole,
they, who were but how small a part,
chose
each one his separate destiny
for goal.

They rose :
and Matter—by that law that brings
eclipse to circle where the planet swings,
and pours the fire of suns
into cold space till they, like moons
(moons which no sun clothes with an alms of light),
go on black paths through the gold night :
by that necessity that takes .
revenge on eminence, and breaks
the spirits of those
who dare too greatly or would climb

too far above the flats of time—
quelled
their strong ambition and their strife
to tower sublime
above the travelled roads of life.

And of their striving only this is left :
the oblivious summits, the lost spires
of rock, the cleft
ravines, the precipice that falls
to the steep lake that reflecting its steep walls,
the broken stairs, the ruined domes . . .
their tombs
raised over them and made to be
types of their old audacity,
and of their arrogant desires
timeless, forlorn memorials.

Not as sea-tempests break the sea
to restless immobility
with waves that climb only to fall again,
not as the tide
following two lovers that still divide
and contradict each other . . .
they were the spirit which denies
Matter that with centrapetal laws
crushes and overawes ;
they were that other Force, twin-brother
of Matter, that out of matter flies
straight to the unrestricted skies ;
they were the power which makes its own,
for its own use, the wide
store of the world—and they remain
effort entombed in monumental pain,
a storm turned stone.

So Earth's first children failed ; and not till man
crowned Life with Knowledge was there found
one who should end what they began,
and lift above the level ground
of Nature's mediocrity
a soul to pierce
the cloud wrack of the universe
with the white peak of Immortality.

REVIEWS

*VIMUTTIMAGGA AND VISUDDHIMAGGA : A COMPARATIVE
STUDY* : by P. V. Bapat, M. A., Ph. D.

Professor of Pali, Fergusson College, Poona. (Printed by J. C.
Sarkhel, at the Calcutta Oriental Press Ltd., Calcutta.)

THIS excellent critical study represents Prof. Bapat's doctorate thesis, submitted to the Harvard University (U. S. A.) in 1932, with certain additions made to it in the light of his later researches on the same subject. After Nagai had first drawn the attention of Buddhist scholars to the existence of "a Chinese counterpart" of Buddhaghosa's well known exposition of Buddhist philosophy, called Visuddhimagga (JPTS 1917—'19), a careful and authoritative comparison of the contents of the Chinese Vimuktimārga and the Pali Visuddhimagga had all along been regarded as a desideratum, which the present work has now sought to fulfil, in a very commendable manner.

For the purpose of the comparison, the author does not present a complete literal translation of the Chinese text, but enumerates, which is undoubtedly the next best thing to do, all the important points in each chapter of the Chinese text from beginning to end, and, with the help of a convenient method of marginal abbreviations, notes down variations, additions, or omissions occurring in it, as compared with the Pali Visuddhimagga. This method must needs leave some scope for a subjective operation of the mind in the selection of the points compared, but the author has apparently taken care to note as far as possible every argument of any consequence, every word of any significance and every reference of any interest, and to leave nothing uninvestigated, that would throw any light upon the main problem of finding out the exact relationship between the two texts : the Chinese Vimuktimārga and the Pali Visuddhimagga. Another point to be noted with reference to the method of presenting the comparisons is that, by giving Pali parallels for Chinese expressions throughout (and even in the title of the book) Bapat has laid himself open to the charge of having almost committed himself to the view, that the original language of the Chin. Vim. was Pali, although he has in fact pronounced that question as difficult to be decided with certainty (p. lv). If at all any conclusion is to be drawn from the Chinese transcriptions of original Indian words, found in the Chin. Vim., we would be inclined to find a Sanskrit rather than a Pali text underlying them. Some transcriptions like that of the "Netri padasūtra" (p. 62), in which both "r's" are distinctly reproduced in Chinese pronunciation, may, in

my opinion, be regarded as sufficient evidence to indicate, that the original was *not* Pali, when we also take along with it the probability of an Indian origin of the text (p. liv). All the same, the advantage of having Pali parallels for comparison with the Pali Visuddhi. is obvious.

In a learned Introduction (Pp. xv—lix) Dr. Bapat has discussed the interrelationship between the Vim. and the Vis. , taking into account the views already expressed by Nagai and Malalasekara in that regard, and has arrived at the broadly accepted result, that Buddhaghosa had Upatissa's Vim. before him and that he amplified the latter with his scholastic erudition for the composition of his own Vis. Some of the issues leading to this final conclusion are however very interesting, although they are of a more or less hypothetical nature and need more solid proofs for their being accepted as final. Among them Dr. Bapat has made out a good case for presuming, that the Vim. was used as a textbook among the Abhayagiri-vādins, who were in the ascendancy when Buddhaghosa visited Ceylon. The attempt, however, to push the date of Upatissa, the author of the Vim., as far back as "somewhere in the first two centuries of the Christian era" (p. iv) appears to me to be too bold and unwarranted. The very fact, that we have here in the Vim. a scholastic development, so closely akin to the period of Buddhaghosa's Vis. , should give us pause before we venture to suggest an interval of three clear centuries between the two authors. In my dissertation on Ullangha's Pratityasamutpādaśāstra (Bonn 1930, Pp. 16 ff.) I have tried to fix up the chronological relationship between these and some other texts on the basis of the development of scholastic interpretations of the Buddhist Chain of Causal-nexus, and I see no reason to change my view, that the Vim. along with the Vis. should be placed later than Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa, inasmuch as both of them present a much more developed form of scholasticism as compared with the latter. Dr. Bapat tries to put the Vim. very near to the Netti. (p. lv) about whose date he accepts unquestioningly Hardy's verdict, which has been rightly doubted by scholars (Cf. Walleiser : *Die Streitlosigkeit des Subhūti*, Heidelberg 1917, p. 36). In fact, the proximity of Buddhaghosa to Upatissa is so close, that Dr. Bapat has been sometimes forced to regard the latter as having actually *anticipated* and answered objections, which are known to have been raised later on by the former in his Vis. (p. xlii). The slighting references, found in the Chin. Vim. to the Caṇḍāla, in which Dr. Bapat rightly detects a foreign element creeping into the original teaching of Buddhism, and the references to embryological and bacteriological terms, unknown even to the Aṣṭāṅghrdaya (p. 76) are certainly not such as to encourage the temptation to attribute a high antiquity to Upatissa's work.

While speaking about Upaṭiṣya, one is naturally reminded of Upatissa, the author of the *Mahābodhivaṃsa* (PTS, 1891), in whom Strong, the editor of that book, recognises a contemporary of Buddhaghosa. Geiger, supporting himself on lean evidence, has later on controverted Strong's opinion and relegated him to the tenth century (*Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa*, Colombo, 1908, p. 70). Whatever that might mean, at least a casual reference to that Upatissa would not have been out of place.

The study has otherwise been very suggestive and offers new scope for research into the various aspects of Buddhist dogmatism of Buddhaghosa's period, which Dr. Bapat has thoroughly mastered. The technical details have been worked out with admirable solicitude and the indices are carefully prepared. The Calcutta Oriental Press has made a good job of this difficult printing, with Chinese and Tibetan types scattered through the pages of the book ; and although a number of corrections will have to be added to the list given at the end, the publication, on the whole, reflects credit upon Indian printing. Dr. Bapat deserves a meed of praise for having made here a solid contribution to the knowledge of Pali Buddhism and comparative Sino-Indian philology.

Dr. Vasudev Gokhale.

MAYAVADA OR THE NON-DUALISTIC PHILOSOPHY (VEDANTA):

By Sadhu Santinatha (Oriental Book Agency, Shukrawar, Poona).

THE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION : In 2 volumes by the same author (Published by Seth Motilal Manickchand--President, Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, Khandesh).

I. *Mayavada* : This is comparatively a small book covering 153 pages, divided into an Introduction and eight chapters treating in a discursive manner of the fundamental topics of the *Advaita-Vedanta* on the lines of Sankara and the latter representatives of his School. The work ends with three Appendices discussing somewhat elaborately such important problems bearing on the position of the Sankarite Vedanta as the theories of Causation and Error and the conception of "Cosmic Ignorance" (*Maya* or *Ajnana*). There is a fourth Appendix at the close of the book giving quotations from important Sanskrit works on Vedanta (all in manuscripts) and bearing on its topics, which the author has consulted in preparation for writing the present one. The Preface relates to the author himself and the extensive studies in Vedanta philosophy he undertook under distinguished scholars of the subject, who are also mostly *sadhus* like himself.

The Introduction is divided into two sections, in the first of which the author states clearly the fundamental doctrines of the Non-dualistic Vedanta regarding (1) The Absolute Reality (*Brahman*), (2) Cosmic Ignorance (*Maya*) and the nature of the illusory world and (3) Individual Souls (*Jivas*) in their relations to each other. The second section gives a short account of the sources of valid knowledge (*Pramanas*), admitted by the Vedanta system. In this connection it is shown why the scripture (*agama*) is regarded by the system as the highest and the only source of our knowledge of the Absolute Reality and the *role* of other *pramanas* as a subordinate thereto. Then the section ends with a brief statement of the topics treated of elaborately in the different chapters. From the manner in which these topics have been discussed and defended against objection thereto in order to bring out clearly the Vedantic position on the subjects, one would naturally think that the author is a staunch advocate of the non-dualistic position. This possible impression he has, however, endeavoured to remove by the learned criticisms he offers on the fundamental doctrines of the position in Chapter V of his voluminous work written and published subsequently, which is here under review next. The only observation that I should like to make here on the manner in which the Vedantic position is presented and its doctrines discussed appear rather to be somewhat literal and as it is usually understood, which does not go deep into the underlying philosophic worth of the position. But the criticisms offered on some of the Vedantic doctrines appear on the whole to be logically sound, though at places the discussions are not so clear as they should have been. The book can, however, be recommended for careful study to those who are interested in the subject and are apt to accept the Vedantic doctrines uncritically.

II. *The Critical Examination of the Philosophy of Religion* : This work, in its two volumes, covers 1,110 pages divided into two Books each of which contains several chapters, sections and Appendices. The First Book treats of what the author considers to be the Fundamentals of Religion, as viewed by different schools of philosophy, mostly Indian, and different sects of Religions in India and outside. The Second Book is devoted to a critical examination of the views and positions treated in the First. This part, very elaborate in treatment, gives the results of the author's philosophical studies and speculations, culminating in a position which it is difficult to designate by a current philosophical name, but which he himself describes in his own words as follows :

"Similarly though he has arrived at the definite conclusion that no religio-metaphysical theory can possibly be without logical defects, his position is to be distinguished from that of the upholders of Scepticism and Agnosticism of the West or the East, because he does not subscribe to the positive assertions associated with these views which also are no less subject to criticism than the doctrines, on the refutation of which they are founded. This position of the writer is that of a sincere and earnest truth-seeker and an unbiassed and uncompromising rational critic, and he expects that his readers also will be actuated by the same spirit in going through and forming proper estimate of the arguments set forth herein" (Introduction, Vol. I, pp. 20-21).

In stating the points of agreement among Religions, as he regards them, the author, however, writes :

"If anything is fundamental and common to the various religions of the world, it is not any objective ideas or beliefs, but an attitude which may be described as appreciative or valuational. No religion is related to another save on the general ground that all are expressions of what man feels to be ultimate values" (Vo. I, p. 17).

The above statement might lead one to the suspicion that the author's attitude towards Religion is rather *pragmatic*. And this is somewhat confirmed by what he states, in summarising his conclusion about the existence of God at the end of volume II (page 1097) :

"Our recognition of this existence of God may be supposed to be the product of the direct experience of God, or of logical inference from the nature of the world of internal experience, or of the infallible authority of the scriptures, or of the consciousness of subjective necessity. The first three sources have been found to be unacceptable to a rational mind and incapable of establishing the existence of God. Hence we can fall back upon the fourth alternative. But from mere subjective necessity, which also is not universally felt, only a conception of one God may be formed and cultured, but the objective reality of God as an independent Entity cannot be proved. Such a God would have conceptual or ideal existence, and would not be proved to be a real existence. He would be an object of faith, and not of knowledge."

The passage reads like the position of Immanuel Kant of the West, and the cultural value ascribed to the faith in God reminds one of the pragmatic attitude of William James towards Religion. Yet the author has omitted to treat of one important approach to the problem of Religion—namely, from the standpoint of value. He only acknowledges, in his own words as quoted above, that all religions are "expressions of what

man feels to be ultimate values." The subject of value and its philosophical as well as religious implications should have been treated properly just as he has treated other standpoints so thoroughly. Here is an omission which is bound to strike a reader whose mind is open to this aspect of the problem, so dominant in the present day.

The real merit of the work consists in the elaborate treatment of many vital problems that arise in connection with Religion both in its theoretical and practical aspects. Although one may not entirely agree with him in the positions that he has tried to establish critically, still a reader of the work cannot but admire the wide outlook with which he has approached the subject in its possible aspects and the extensive studies, mostly of Indian Philosophy and Religion, the results of which he has utilised critically in his discussions. References to the positions of Western philosophical systems and their bearing on the fundamental problems of Religion are rather comparatively scanty, and so are the references to religion other than strictly Indian. And treatment of the Mystical Schools, both Indian and Western, is rather prominent by its absence. A work purporting to be an all-round criticism of the philosophy of Religion should not have these omissions. This is rather a defect of the work, which it is hoped the author will try to remove in a future volume on the subject, if he undertakes to go further in his ambitious project.

P. B. Adhikari.

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE SANSKRIT MANUSCRIPTS IN THE GOVERNMENT ORIENTAL LIBRARY, MYSORE, VOLUME I—VEDAS: (Printed at the Govt. Branch Press, Mysore, 1937.) Price Rs. 3—12—0.

WE are just in receipt of this volume, the first publication of its kind by the Mysore University, giving a descriptive account of the Vedic section of the Manuscripts in the Oriental Library under the management of the University. The volume contains classified lists of Vedic manuscripts under the heads : *Samhitas*, *Brāhmanas*, *Āranyakas*, *Upanisads* and the *Mantraprasna*. But they are not mere lists of works as are usually found in the Catalogues published by other Libraries. A glance at the descriptive information given under each work and about its contents will show what amount of careful labour has been undergone in the preparation of the publication. It sets an example of what a catalogue of books belonging to a University library should be, particularly on its oriental section. As it stands, the

present volume removes a great want felt by oriental scholars in the matter of easy reference to works bearing on their subjects of study and research. The English Introduction with which the publication begins giving an idea of the nature of the work undertaken and the Indices at the end facilitating easy reference to the works catalogued, are indeed valuable for one who would be making use of the volume. The library appears to have a very large collection of manuscripts, many of which were not hitherto known or available, and they are, it appears, classified under twenty different subjects—*Vedic* and *post-Vedic*. Under the former head only the strictly vedic literature is published in this first volume. It is hoped the undertaking will not end with the present one but will be followed by others of the kind in quick succession, as far as possible, giving such descriptive account of the valuable works in the collection. The paper, printing and the general get-up are good. The only thing that strikes one is the long list of *Errata* covering almost six pages. This is no doubt somewhat unavoidable in a publication of this sort dealing with old manuscripts. Nevertheless greater care in proof-reading is expected to reduce such oversight to a considerable extent. It is hoped this will be attended to in future publications of the sort.

P. B. Adhikari.

TO THE STUDENTS : By Mahatma Gandhi (Compiled and Published
by Anand T. Hingorani, D/3, Cosmopolitan Colony, Karachi.
Price Rs. 2/- pp. 317).

EVERY earnest seeker of Truth, which is universal as well as eternal in essence, comes sooner or later to cover all aspects of Life. This is the reason why nothing vital is ever outside the orbit of Gandhiji's activities and why his idealism is integrated. Hence, the variety of subjects on which he has touched in his speeches and writings.

The book, under review, is a compilation of the "select speeches and writings of Gandhiji, pertaining to the students of India and Burma (during 1920-1938)." It contains his views on Art, Literature, Marriage, Education, Prayer, Sex, Social Service, and other allied themes. Here are a few quotations culled at random :

"All true art must help the soul to realize its inner self."

"Marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of *Moksha* inasmuch as it only tightens the bonds of flesh."

"The base imitation of the West, the ability to speak and write correct and polished English will not add one brick to the Temple of Freedom."

"What is literary training worth if it cramps and confuses us at a critical moment in national life?"

"The end of all knowledge must be building up of character."

"Our literary men will pore on Kalidas and Bhavabhuti and English authors and will give us imitations. I want them to go to villages, study them and give something life-giving."

"Works without faith and prayer are like artificial flower that has no fragrance."

"The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of a man or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust, man cannot hope to rule over self."

There will be many among our "modern" young men and women who will differ from Gandhiji in his views. But they can be sure of one thing, namely, that these embody not only the soul of his lifelong experience but also the crux and core of the culture of our country. And, as such, they will do well to *ponder* over his points-of-view, so that their contact with his dynamic mind may *vitalize* their own thinking and lead them to a realization of their own vision and vantage-ground of Truth.

To the Students is a gospel for our students, who are grateful to Mr. Hingorani for having brought it to their door in such a compact and artistic form.

G. M.

MYSORE ME : by Sj. Gurunath Sharma

Published by Deshi Rajya

Sahitya Mandir,

Madras.

IN view of the possibility of making Hindi, or as others would have it, Hindustani, the lingua franca in India, the book under review is interesting. The book, as it has been pointed out in the Preface, is a 'joint-product' of the author, publisher, printer and the compositor—all from the South. The aim of the author has been two-fold : namely, serving the 'Rastravani', by which he means Hindi, and laying bare before the reader the internal working of an important native state—Mysore ; both being topics of interest to contemporary India. Quite natural for a school-master, the

reviewer here cannot help saying that this little book contains mistakes of every description, spelling, grammatical, etc., not less than eight times the number of its pages—which is 103 ; but at the same time it clearly shows the eagerness of the South to speak to the North through the medium of Hindi. It is by such sincere attempts that the cause of a common language can be strengthened rather than by pushing Hindi down the throats of our Madrasi brethren with batons and bayonets.

B. Chandola.

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly.

Vol. V, Part II, New Series

August 1939—October 1939

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BARNA AND BIRN •

By Nandlal Bose
Santimoletan

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

August

New Series, Vol. V, Part II

1939

LOOKING BACK

Rathindranath Tagore

[Looking back over past experiences, one is struck by the discovery that many events that loomed large at the time of their happening have been either obliterated or reduced to vague, meaningless impressions, while some experiences that seemed to have little relevance to one's personal life then, have gathered significance with the passage of time. Four such oases on the imaginary journey backwards through the wasteland of years strewn with corpses of youth's hopes and dreams, I have tried to share with the readers of the Visva-Bharati Quarterly.]

KEDARNATH

April, 1901.

WE were of a stream of pilgrims plodding their way over hills and valleys, across rushing torrents and ice-fields to the seat of the great Siva, the temple of Kedarnath on the border of Tibet. Pilgrims came from the sandy desertland of the Punjab, from the cocoanut groves of Malabar, from the soft green fields of Bengal, from every part of India. They included youngsters hardly out of their teens, white-haired elders retired from all worldly affairs, newly-wed brides and wrinkled up old widows—men, women and children, old and young. They

were dressed in a hundred different garbs, the gay colours of the Rajput women, the magnificent turbans of the Punjabi army officers, intermingling with the simple white dhoti and sari of the Bengalees, the ample folds of the dust-coloured skirts worn by the women of Agra and neighbouring districts, the long yellow robes of the Sannyasis and the almost nude bodies smirched with ashes and ochre paint of the different sects of Sadhus. Over 200 miles of stony path fringing the holy river as it wound its rough way through Himalayan mountains the pilgrims marched. The wide valleys, hot and dusty, where grew apricots and pomegranates, gradually gave way to forest glades scented with the rosen gum of the deodars. The road climbs higher and higher until from a dizzy height the river is seen like a silvery thread winding the feet of the hills like the anklets of a dancing girl. Down into the gorge a precarious crossing is provided by a hanging bridge of ropes over the rushing stream leaping over boulders as big as houses. Crossing a wide plateau, a flat prairie of reeds and grasses with solitary mango trees to mark the way, the pilgrims reach Karnaprayag where the river parts itself in two, the turbulent Alakananda noisily following the wider valley on its upward course to the glaciers of Badrinath and the delicate blue green Mandakini (Heavenly stream), true to its name, rising rapidly through narrow gorges, cut into deeply wooded slopes of the mountain chain that leads to the ice-fields of Kedarnath.

Sitting in a circle under a spreading walnut tree, where the limpid waters of the maidenly Mandakini disdain to mingle their virgin purity with the muddy Alakananda, the women light fires and bake *chapatis*. Their hands keep time with the lilting tune of the song composed for the occasion:

*Kedarnathke charana-kamalame prana hamara atake.**

Steeper and steeper the path cuts its way upwards. It is hardly a path—a narrow wedge-shaped passage cut into the

* At the lotus feet of Kedarnath my soul rests.

rock rising almost perpendicular from the bottom, thousands of feet below. The feet are swollen and bruised by the sharp-pointed flints. Only a few steps at a time can be taken ; breathing is difficult. Pain and misery are written on the face of everyone. I hear a heart-rending cry behind me. Turning round I see a decrepit beggar, almost in the last stages of consumption, who had been following us, bemoaning the loss of the last bit of rag which he had managed to wind round his blood-stained feet. As he saw my pitiful look he cried out:

“Don’t look like that. This is a small matter. I shall not be left behind. My Kedarnath is calling me ;—who will stand in my way ? *Jai Kedar ki jai !*”

A SUMMER VACATION AT SANTINIKETAN

April, 1904.

A FORTNIGHT of scorching sun and hot winds at the end of April. The students have closed their books and gone away seeking kinder shelter elsewhere. The summer vacation at Santiniketan has begun and left me and a few other unfortunates to a vagabond existence in the empty halls of the institution. The humming life of the asrama has all of a sudden stopped. We prepare ourselves for a succession of dull and monotonous days and the discomforts of a dry hot season. But very soon I get used to the emptiness and the loneliness. Instead of getting bored, as I had expected, I am surprised to find that new interests and strange beauties which had quite escaped me during the busy life of the term, gradually begin to permeate my consciousness and in the end completely envelop me in their meshes.

Nature is a jealous mistress : she will only give herself to those who come to her in solitude and with a clean mind. Everyday we have risen with the bells and seen the early dawn redden the horizon just beyond the row of palms. But our eyes

did not see it. Now the bell does not ring, but I hasten out of bed long before light breaks in the eastern sky, fearful lest I miss a shade of colour I have not seen before. The days are long, but every hour is charged with possibilities, every tree carries a message, every twitter of the birds gives a new zest in life. My friends and my loud classmates have deserted me, but the soil, the wind, the sky, the little animals and insects that every day we disdain even to glance at, have come so close to me that I cannot turn away but must look at them again and again and each time uncover a new secret, an unfamiliar aspect. It was with a keen desire for such discoveries and novel experiences that I would roam about the barren wastes in the blazing sun or follow a *myna* to its nest in the *sal* forest or keep long hours of vigil to hear the sound of the insects at night.

It was not all poetry. One day about noon I was standing in the verandah of the library and looking at the heat waves rising rhythmically over the empty rice fields and the occasional whirlwinds that would come from nowhere, gather the dry leaves and shoot them straight up to impossible heights, when a pair of hyenas coolly walk into the scene and, in the twinkling of an eye before I could take up a stick and run after them, they have killed a lamb and lifted it bodily up on the back and disappeared. The chase was quite useless and in any case the lamb was dead long before I had realised what had happened. The daring and the incredible swiftness of the animals were unbelievable.

It was during the summer holidays that I came in close contact for the first and last time with the poet Satish Roy. For he was dead before the next holidays began. But who can gauge the infinite value of the companionship of a rare genius even though it be for a few days? He radiated energy and enthusiasm, combined a fearlessly critical mind with an almost voluptuous enjoyment of all that was good. Naïve and absolutely unconventional in his thought and habits, he was withal deeply respectful where respect was due. What was most

wonderful was the rich store of his knowledge of literature ; a youth of twenty-one, he could recite for hours freely from Virgil, Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare or Kalidas, his favourites being Browning and my father. His generous nature made no distinction and, although at that time I was quite immature in years and in mind, Satish Roy poured his knowledge and his soul out to me. During the day we would sit in a cool dark nook of the library building and read the classics. And very often the whole night would be spent lying on our backs on the bare ground watching the constellations dip one after the other into oblivion and listening to his voice reciting Bengali poetry. It was rarely necessary to ask the meaning of a word or a passage, the reading was so expressive. But never did I hear him recite so well (and never shall I want to hear poems recited again from the mouth of any one else) as he did one day to the accompaniment of a thunderstorm that swept over the asrama. Being exceptionally hot and sultry that afternoon—it was the last day of Chaitra*—we kept ourselves inside the darkened room longer than usual. As we stepped out a glorious sight took us completely by surprise. Black inky clouds had gathered in the northwest sky and kept advancing like the deep cavernous mouth of a great angry monster ready to swallow the earth. Angry were its deep sonorous rumblings and its path was marked with clouds of red dust mountain high. We stood awestruck on the verandah and watched its rapid progress across the open ground until it flung itself on the asrama with sharp peals of thunder and blinding rain. At the same time Satish Roy's voice rang out with the opening stanza of *Barsha-Shesh*.†

*Like a fruit shaken free by an impatient wind,
thou comest, New Year, whirling in a frantic dance
amidst the stampede of the wind-lashed clouds
and infuriate showers,*

* That is, the last day of the Bengali year, falling somewhere about the middle of April.

† *End of the Year*, a very beautiful and powerful poem, in tune with the stormy and destructive aspect of Nature, by Rabindranath Tagore.

*while trampled by thy turbulence
are scattered away the faded and the frail
in an eddying agony of death.**

His voice never faltered once and kept even pace with the storm till the last line. I do not yet know whether I listened to the words that came out or merely watched entranced the figure, every movement of which seemed inspired. Before we realised what had happened Satish Roy had disappeared into the storm. Afterwards a search party found his battered and half-dead form lying under a tree near the Bhuvandanga village.

With Satish Roy and Dinendranath as leaders of the small group of stay-at-home vagabonds in the asrama during this vacation, the atmosphere became charged with poetry and music. Everyone had either to fall in with the mood or be lost in his own isolation. There was a Brahmo gentleman, a fine figure with flowing white beard like a Hebrew patriarch, who did not like that we youngsters should lead this sort of Bohemian life in the asrama. Like most Brahmos he considered Santiniketan as a Brahmo colony and therefore it hurt his sense of propriety to see us listening to unexpurgated editions of Shakespeare and Kalidas. I once remember his hurriedly leaving the adjoining room where he had his office, stopping both his ears with fingers to avoid overhearing some particularly delectable passage from *Sakuntala*. The Brahmos, for all their spiritual eclecticism, have been known to carry their puritanism to extravagant, and sometimes, ridiculous limits. Asramites have never spared them for their naïve censoriousness. There is a story fondly cherished and handed down by each outgoing group of students to their successors, which I hope will bear repetition. A staunch Brahmo visitor had arrived one night and was given a room in the Guest-house overlooking the garden where flourished a stately *Kadamba* tree. In the morning as soon as he opened the window he saw this tree and was scandalized. His morning prayer

* Free translation of the original Bengali by the author, first published in the *Spectator*, London, 10 Jan. 1931. *Ed.*

remained unsaid and he hastily packed up his things and left, saying that he could not bear to see such an obscene tree in Maharshi's asrama. The *Kadamba* is supposed to be the favourite tree of Krishna under whose shade and with the round ball-like yellow flowers of which he carried on his amorous games with the milk-maids.

A professor of science had come to spend the vacation with us and gave me lessons in chemistry with the help of a few test tubes and beakers that lay in the dust in a corner of the so-called laboratory. He soon fell in with the general atmosphere and even began to personify the elements into deities—some with four arms, some with ten heads and so on, and gave graphic descriptions of their love makings and jealousies. His descriptions were so vivid that later on when I had to take up a more serious study of the subject I had no difficulty in working out any formula. At that time we had no idea that the same science professor would become a well-known poet of modern Bengal.

Father had been with my ailing sister in Almora from where he used to send us fresh mountain honey as consolation and left the asrama in charge of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya. He was a romantic figure. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family, he was attracted to the Brahmo Samaj in his youth. His reading of Cardinal Newman's works later on made him a convert to the Catholic religion. During this period he edited a remarkable weekly in English called *Sophia*. Although a catholic he dressed in the orange robes of a Hindu Sanyasin. Such was his strong national feeling. It was this inborn national pride which made him finally give up Christianity and take to a militant form of Hinduism towards the end of his life. He came to the asrama when he was still in an unsettled state of mind. I am not sure but it is likely that the discussions with Brahmabandhab led father to write the series of essays beginning with "Brahman", and to name the school "Brahmacharyasram" which has since been dropped. But very soon the rapid development of rank nationalism in Upadhyaya led to a parting of the ways. Father

remained content with the purely educational experiment at Santiniketan, while the other started the pungently national daily, *Sandhya*, and threw himself headlong in politics in Calcutta. I have rarely met any one who could speak or write such beautiful and chaste English. But when he took to politics he gave it up for a vile but virile colloquial Bengali of Hitlerian type.

We regarded Brahmabandhab not only as the immediate head of the institution, but as a sannyasin, a spiritual man, before whom we would stand in great awe and fear. One day a wrestler from the Punjab wandered into the asrama and challenged anybody to give him a trial. A look at the figure kept everyone at a good distance. We youngsters were getting disappointed to miss a rare treat like this when, to our consternation and surprise, Upadhyayji came running in tights and, with loud claps on the biceps, as is the custom, challenged the Punjabi giant to a fight. And didn't the Bengali intellectual give a good time to the professional wrestler !

The aspect of Santiniketan during the dry summer months is little known to outsiders : the extreme heat and dryness which make the grass crackle under foot, the burnt brown colour of the whole landscape, the hot gusts of wind that raise clouds of red dust, and the sudden thunderstorms that are gorgeous to witness but destructive of all property. It is indeed a *rudra-Baisakh** that visits this place but how like magic everything is changed after the first good shower in June ! With one passing of the magician's wand, leaves clothe the trees again, the meadows become softly green, the birds sing ceaselessly from every branch, the desert is changed into a garden.

Nature rejoiced,—but I took my seat in the class with a heavy heart when the term began.

* *Rudra*, terrible, destructive aspect of Siva ; *Baisakh*, corresponding to April—May.

PARESHNATH

April, 1912.

FOOLISHLY wandering about and getting scorched in the dry undulating plains of Chhota Nagpur during the summer holidays, we could not help putting on the breaks as the refreshingly green peak of the Pareshnath hill loomed up in front of us. This solitary hill rising suddenly to four thousand feet amidst scattered hillocks, which seem but pygmies in comparison, is an anomaly for which I do not know if local geologists have a ready explanation, but certainly it baffles the mind of any traveller who happens to pass within its range. It rises clear above the surrounding plains to a sharp point with only one break, an elongated spur towards its base. In majestic beauty it can hardly be beaten, its solitariness defeating any attempt at comparison. And yet the proportions are so nicely balanced that to an unaware wayfarer the top seems within easy reach. At least it did not deter us from dismounting the car and, without any preparation whatsoever, straightway beginning the climb.

The Jaina priest in the dharamshala, where the footpath took its first leap up through the tropical jungle covering the lower ridges, must have felt amused at the nonchalant daring of the tourists, but it did not prevent him from doing a kindly act in offering us a *papaya* as large as a water-melon. The gift hardly provoked a smile of gratitude from the recipients at the time, and the burden was carried away with as little grace as the exigencies of etiquette demanded. His after-thought and an act of undoubted piety as it turned out afterwards, in sending after us four coolies with a charpoy for my wife, the only lady in the party, was more welcomed.

Up and up we mounted through the jungle. The *papaya* was soon consumed. A few pilgrims hurrying back to reach the monastery in the valley below before darkness set in warned us of the difficulties awaiting us. An old woman caught hold of

my hands and with tears in her eyes begged of us to desist from such a foolhardy adventure. But young blood would listen to no such warnings. Soon we four, with the coolies, were the only human species left with the ancient moss-covered Sal trees towering above our heads as the sun in a haze of amber-coloured dust slowly dipped below the horizon in a distant valley of the Hazaribag district. As darkness set in indefinable noises of the hidden night life of the forest filtered to our ears. To drown their fears an occasional "Ram, Ram !" from the doolie-bearers would go forth in the empty sky and not even an echo would be heard to re-assure them. Worn out and subdued in spirit, at last we reached the pilgrims' rest house on a narrow ridge beneath the summit. The house was securely locked. Some dry grass and a few logs kept a fire going outside in a clearing and we lay down and slept till the rays of the morning sun mercilessly beat on our drowsy eyelids and made us get up. There we were perched on the top of the world—but still higher rose the spire of the marble temple of Pareshnath, the Saint whom the Jains worship, glittering in the sun. We dragged our aching limbs over the long flight of steps eager to see the riches of the temple hall. We stepped into a room spotlessly clean, devoid of any gaudiness, dazzling in its chaste whiteness like a widow after her morning bath, empty with the exception of a book of sayings of the holy man. Thus we were left alone in that empty hall in the seclusion of a solitary mountain peak, every stone of which was a mute but irrefutable witness to man's ever-ascending spiritual aspiration.

POTISAR

October, 1924.

A LONG and tedious journey on a jolting train came to an end and with a joyful eagerness, as when one is going to meet a long-lost friend, I boarded the houseboat which was to carry me to Potisar. The boat moved without making any fuss and with hardly any apparent hurry, but soon the railway bridge over the river, the ugly sheet-iron sheds that cluster round a wayside station in Bengal, were left far behind and out of sight.

The river Atrai is not one of the many rivers that have a wide reputation in our country. It is hardly known to outsiders. Its history does not go back to ancient times. It is not mentioned in the Mahabharata. Pilgrims do not crowd to its banks on holy days to dip in its waters to purify their souls. The river is one of the multitude of similar obscure courses of water meandering aimlessly for hundreds of miles through the verdant green plains of Bengal. It seems to be conscious of its insignificance and tries to find its way out willy nilly through wide stretches of paddy land, often spreading out and losing itself in formless swamps. It would then suddenly make up its mind to boldly enter a village and, when half through, would gently turn round a courtyard with apologies to its owner and disappear again into the wilderness. And never during its endless sinuous course would it have the courage to approach a big market or a prosperous town.

As I was carried along the sluggish stream of this Atrai river I soon fell into the mood of it. Time lost its measured value. The necessity of reaching a destination vanished. I drew the easy chair near the window and gazed silently at the slowly receding landscape. On both sides of the bank were laid ingenious fish traps in various shapes and sizes. On the tip of a leafless bamboo shoot perched a king-fisher apparently at rest but keenly alert to any movement in the water below.

A procession of girls, with folds of their rustic saris drawn over the heads and carrying shining brass pitchers clasped to their lithsome bodies, wound their way to the bank where the path from the village dipped into the river and where with clamorous shouts naked children splashed about in the water. A flock of tame ducks gliding on the water drew away towards the opposite bank. At the next turning of the river the inner courtyard of a cluster of thatched cottages lay exposed by the bank with the bamboo fencing to which still clung a cucumber climber. On one side was a stack of paddy brought fresh from the fields and on the other stood a couple of old women with long poles thrashing the paddy in a wooden cup. Watching from the river as it winded in and out through the peaceful hamlets was revealed to me the panorama of the daily life of these simple folk, the drudgery of the men in the fields, the monotonous routine of daily housekeeping of the women, their occasional recreations and rare amusements. I would sit gazing and watching with interest every little detail until suddenly the feeling that I had no right to such an intimate view of a life that was not my own would make me withdraw indoors, ashamed of my curiosity.

But this picture of the serene life of the peasantry in a corner of Bengal would not leave me even when I sat alone inside the cabin. My thoughts would go back to the primitive age and still the same picture would appear. I run through the long history of India with its rise and fall of civilisations, with its devastating invasions and internecine wars, and yet I can see no change in the picture of the villages that I have just seen. I begin to wonder what it is that has carried this life unbroken and unaffected through the centuries of a political history characterized by kaleidoscopic changes. Is there a hidden strength, a principle of social cohesion stronger than that which knits the chemical atoms together, an elemental force of which we are still unaware that has kept the life on the land unchanged through the ages? Or is it just its amorphous character, lack of all

organisation, its entirely negative aspect that has given it an enormous pliability to adjust itself to all conditions ?

In such a confused state of mind I disembark at a village and meet a group of elderly people. I am eager to question them to find an answer to the problem worrying me. Sitting on a primitive cane chair in the low-roofed verandah of a cottage, with my hosts squatting on a mat in front of me, most of them wearing only a loin cloth and passing the hookah made from the shell of the cocoanut to each other, I imagine myself transported to the middle ages, holding a panchayat over some knotty social problem concerning the village.

An old man with flowing white beard gets up and says : "Babuji, what is the use of all this talk ? Nothing can our young men do with all the rubbish reforms they glibly expound to us. Give us a Lenin and everything will be changed."

The spell was broken. I got up and hurried back to my boat.

THREE POEMS

E. E. Speight

MAN

THIS have I learnt, my faith as yet unuttered :
A man can be as naught, less than the dust
Because of sloth or evil courses taken,
Knowing his evil. And I greatly know
He can be all that ever he conceived
Of any God, almighty, everlasting
For moments of Eternity, wherein
His thoughts are more than the very stars of heaven,
His deeds immortal, and his prayer at one
With secret understanding, mystery
Of all creation, and the hidden ways
That link remotest vastness with the beating
Of his own heart, the Empire of the brain
With that poor mendicant, mortality.

THE UNCROWNED LEADER

THIS man the world's great names have clustered round,
The warriors, the wise,
This soul whom naught hath daunted, sight or sound,
Whose fearless, friendly eyes,
Impreguably ensconced, have sought and found
Beauty where beauty dies,
The truth in grim and gracious, the redound
Of deathless agonies,—
Is one no word hath named, is yet uncrowned
Of secret hierarchies,
A sad redeemer wandering love-bound
To rescue lost allies,
So well content to walk the common ground
From which arise
All grief, all grandeur. In his dreams resound
Renunciation's heavenly loyalties.

A. E.

O LOVER of the twilight ways,
Verily rich in meed of praise
For Eire, thine own beloved land,
In words the world shall understand
Or perish, thou hast radiantly,
As with the brightness of the sea
At sunrise, or the pure sword-blade
Of an archangel, perfect made.

Star-powers, doom-threatenings and love
Thou hast commingled ; aeons move
In thy small verses : peoples rise,
Old cities wane, proud dynasties
Pass with their triumph and their shame
And are but as a dream of fame
In those few letters thou hast graven
On the crystal walls of heaven.

The world's great sorrows in thy soul
Are given song ; as clouds they roll,
Bearing the thunder and the fright,
Leaving the fragrance and the light
Of thine own spirit's infinite sense
Of pity, and the heart-rays thence
Ranging the darkened lives of men
To thrill them with resolve again.

THE TYRANNY OF FOREIGN WORDS

J. B. Kripalani*

SINCE the advent of British Rule, India has suffered not only from the tyranny of foreign domination but also the subtler intellectual tyranny of foreign words and phrases. This has been particularly so in the political field. Words and phrases used in political thought and controversy have often lacked content and reality. Their uncritical and indiscriminate use, instead of clearing the mind, has led to empty disputations and a useless war of words. The disputants have often fought and vanquished or have been scared away by phantoms that had and have no real existence in Indian political life and conditions. If this mock fight did not create actual and painful divisions in our already divided ranks one would enjoy it and derive a little fun and entertainment from it. As it is, the divisions caused become so real and acute that they poison healthy public life with tragic results to our fight for freedom.

Political words, as all other words, have their origin and history in objective and subjective facts of the land of their birth and development. They are created by particular and peculiar circumstances and surroundings. They cannot be transported and transplanted in alien soil unless the ground is carefully and laboriously prepared for their reception, that is, unless similar conditions as exist in the native soil are produced or evolved in the new land.

In the early years of this century the so-called moderates and extremists fought over unreal issues. It was a great battle, but what the disputants really fought for none could tell. The moderates raised the cry of constitutional agitation. They mechanically recited or sung of "liberty broadening from precedent

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to precedent". The extremists in vain pointed out that there could be no constitutional agitation in a land where there was no constitution, having an inner logical urge of movement and evolution. Nor were there any institutions and methods by which the constitution could be pushed forward. As for "liberty broadening from precedent to precedent," there was no liberty at all ; consequently there could be no precedents to guide. India was suffering from foreign military rule with the lever of its movement in another land and in alien hands, interested only in selfish exploitation and not in broadening the bounds of liberty. While the extremists were just in their criticism, they too had nothing positive to offer. The policy of prayer, petition and protest had no alternative save louder declamations and semi-mystic worship of the Motherland.

Take another example. To make themselves politically respectable, unconsciously of course, the moderates began calling themselves *Liberals*, at a time when even in England the Liberal creed and policies had exhausted themselves and other more effective parties had grown up. Liberalism was born in a land where people were already enjoying the blessings of parliamentary and constitutional rule. These had to be consolidated and extended. Liberalism, therefore, in the political field stood for the extension of franchise and civil liberties, like the freedom of platform, press and association and trial by jury. It stood for the protection of the individual against the possible high-handedness of the State. In the economic field it stood for free trade and *laissez faire* in a country where by long protection afforded by general legislation and navigation laws and a vast empire, a decided supremacy in the world markets had already been established and foreign competition could easily be challenged. In India both the political and economic prerequisites of Liberalism were absent. The problems facing the country were different. The greatest of them before which every other paled into insignificance was that of the foreigner from whose unwilling hands rudimentary free institutions and democratic

parliamentary rule had to be wrested. The question of expanding civil liberties and the rest of the political programme of Liberalism could come only after national liberty had been achieved. In the economic field it was pathetic to see Indian Liberals, like the late Sir D. Wacha, stubbornly sticking to the theory of free trade and *laissez faire*, when there were only slight beginnings of Indian trade and industry and these too were having an uncertain existence, owing to unfair competition buttressed by the political power of England. Even if there were no political subjection, India would have needed decades of protection to build up its commerce and industry in a world where the most industrially advanced countries are obliged to protect their commerce and industry.

When Pandit Jawaharlal formed the Civil Liberties Union, some leading Liberals refused the invitation to join. They instinctively felt that the assertion of civil liberties in India would land them into revolutionary action for the wresting of power from foreign hands. Many people at the time, including Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, did not quite appreciate or understand the reasons behind their refusal to join. The Liberals were rightly apprehensive that by the lure of the Civil Liberties Union, they may be drawn into the revolutionary national struggle which they had eschewed long ago. In a country, where there were no effective parliamentary rule and free institutions, any real and fruitful movement for Civil Liberties would inevitably entail revolutionary struggle for the prerequisites of civil liberties, involving basic and fundamental changes in the existing political order.

This is past history. Today the glamour of England and English political life, institutions and words is on the wane. It has, however, been replaced by general western influence. European political ideologies with all their various divisions and consequent quarrels are sought to be reproduced on the Indian soil. As long as there were only English fashions that were followed, one could argue against them on the ground of slavish

imitation of the conquerors. But the new terms and phrases come in the name of science and modernism. The charge of slavish imitation cannot therefore be easily substantiated as there is no political power obliging imitation. For all this, it is no less imitation and no less slavish. Only now it is more subtle and insidious and therefore less easy to detect, fight and repel.

The new words, imported from western political life and thought, are a legion. Here I shall select only a few for treatment to serve as illustrations. The first word that I will take up for discussion is *Fascism*.

One often hears the charge of fascism levelled against the Congress or that section of it which wields power and holds office in the organisation. That the whole of the organisation is fascist, is a cry raised by its opponents. That the party in power, even though it is the majority party, is fascist, is the charge brought by those members of the organisation who are in a minority and yet have the ambition to capture office and wield its influence and prestige. The opponents of the Congress or the opponents of the party in power, never wait to consider the real meaning and nature of fascism. Their purpose is served by raising the cry of wolf and scaring away people.

What is fascism? Strachey defines it as the dictatorship of finance-capital supported by petty bourgeoisie and such workers as can be successfully deceived. Now whether Congress or the party in power is a dictatorship or a democracy, it cannot be reasonably asserted that it is the dictatorship of finance-capital, for the simple reason that there is no finance-capital worth the name in India. Most of the banking of the country is in the hands of foreign banks or the foreign Government. If the Congress is not a dictatorship of finance-capital, neither is it the dictatorship of capital. Most and the richest of the capitalistic concerns in the land are foreign, and to suppose that the Congress or its executive is in the hands or under the control of these is an idea which appears ridiculous as soon as it is clearly stated. Nor is the Congress in the hands of Indian Capital. Indian Capital

is so nervous about its present position, which can be marred any day by the action of the Government of India in the financial and the industrial fields, that it has never ventured to toy with the idea of whole-heartedly supporting the Congress. But it is argued that Indian capital pulls the string from behind. The major policies of the Congress have, since 1920, been moulded by Gandhiji, and unless one considers him as the agent of Indian Capital in spite of his advocacy of Khadi and Village Industry, one cannot square theory with facts. It is also well known that the Indian capitalist and the zamindar are always nervous of Congress activities which, ever since Gandhiji came in the political field, have been predominantly in the interests of the masses.

Is the Congress or its executive a dictatorship? The idea of political dictatorship implies that within the country or the nation, there is no other authority that has supreme and undivided control and power. Such a power is not only supreme internally but enjoys international independence and equality. Can there be a dictatorship in India when the country is in bondage and is ruled by a foreign standing army? If political thinking were not muddled by the misuse of imported words, nobody who had any reputation for clear thinking to lose, would stake it by styling the Congress or its executive as a dictatorship. Here is a dictatorship that dictates, rules and crushes without police, without an army, without machine guns, guillotines, gallows, jails, concentration camps, volcanic islands, third degree methods or even a bottle of castor oil. If the Congress is powerless internally, except for its moral influence, externally its authority is nil. It has only a potential value in international affairs. But the nations of the world are so completely in the grip of the present and its problems, that they cannot afford to wait and consider potential values. Their need is in the present. It must therefore be a strange dictatorship which works and functions within the, military dictatorship of the foreign rule, without the requisite paraphernalia of

making its will prevail internally or externally except by means of non-violence and moral force and persuasion. The non-violence that it uses may only be of the physical kind but nonetheless it is distinct from the police with its regulation batons and the army with all its modern machinery of mass destruction. Its moral force may sometimes cause inconvenience to those against whom it is opposed, it may even be coercive, but only the politically interested and the intellectually blind can consider it the same as the mailed and naked physical might that stalks and overawes the world today.

Again, fascism stands, according to its partisans, for the collective, corporate or the totalitarian State. The State alone has full and free life. Individuals can find whatever fullness and freedom they can claim, in the State and not outside or against it. Individuals are no end in themselves ; the State alone is an end in itself. The totalitarian conception of the State is neither legal nor political, it is biological. Individuals are like cells in the body. Each cell is of course free in the sense in which a cell can be free, to discharge its appointed function, the function assigned to it by the whole body politic, that is the State. There can be from this point of view no civil liberties like the right to free speech, free assembly, free press, and free and fair trial as conceived of in a democracy which does not think of the State in biological terms. In the fascist State there can be no such thing as conduct motivated by an individual's whim or fancy. All life, individual or corporate, political, economic, cultural and even religious, is regulated by and in the interest of a mystical entity, the State. The State is comprised not of so many individuals united and organised for a particular purpose ; but beyond the sum total of its inhabitants, there is something undefinable which is of the essence of the State and which compels unswerving obedience and loyalty.

Now the Congress or its dominant group has no conception of the corporate state. Their view of the State is not

biological but political and legal. Their creed, in this respect, is democratic and liberal. The State is only an instrument, a very important and powerful instrument, no doubt, for the higher life of the individual. It is no independent or living entity. It is only a convenient human device, historically created and evolved, for the safeguarding of the Individual's privileges and rights. There are therefore certain individual rights and liberties which even the State may not interfere with. Gandhiji's views about this are very clear. Not only are they individualistic but, if anything, they are inclined towards philosophical anarchism. While in the corporate State there can be no individual judgment or conscience, Gandhiji ever swears by individual conscience and often thinks that it must override everything else. Then his political reform centres round the idea of making political life and the State moral. The totalitarians conceive of the State either as non-moral or above all morality, beyond good and evil. There are other powerful leaders in the Congress who, if anything, are individualists and pride themselves on the fact. Some of them find it difficult to merge their individuality in an organisation, a party, section or a block, even at the risk of being ineffective. They hold by their individual judgment and express it rather aggressively.

A natural consequence of the totalitarian and biological conception of the State is the creation of a bellicose, jingoist, aggressive and imperialistic nationalism. The aims, ideals and the practice of the Congress has been quite contrary to this. A non-violent organisation cannot possibly be jingoist or imperialist. Gandhiji, whose powerful impress the Congress bears, has always declared that he serves humanity through his nation and nothing that can harm humanity can possibly be good nationalism. Shri Jawaharlal expresses emphatically his internationalism. Other leaders too do not pit their nationalism against internationalism. They are national because they consider that any genuine, true and lasting internationalism can only be built upon the basis of free and equal nations and not upon imperialism.

In international politics, the Congress, in many of its resolutions, has declared that it has no quarrel with its neighbours with whom it wants to live in peace and amity. It has often enough expressed its abhorrence of imperialism. It has always advocated international peace, collective security, non-aggression and disarmament. India participates in the World Peace Congress as a member. Preoccupied as it is with its own problems of freedom, it has always stood up for the under-dog in international affairs. Its sympathy for Abyssinia and Czechoslovakia, its help to Spain and China are proofs, if proofs were needed, of its anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and anti-Nazi sympathies.

Yet another ugly manifestation of fascism is the belief in the chosen people and the chosen race. The poor Indian is too much politically depressed and too much the victim of race and colour-prejudice wherever he goes, to indulge in the luxury of advancing or advocating a doctrine of racial superiority. Even though India is kept down by foreign domination, there is no hatred of the foreigner as such. Though the word Aryan is of Indian origin, Aryanism as the creed of the blonde beast, is confined to Europe. The Swastika, the sign of peace and well-being, has been one of the age-long symbols of India ; yet only in Nazi Germany does it stand for political and racial aggression. The Congress has always sought to do justice to minorities, racial and others. The complaint of the majority community rather is that its interests have been neglected.

So far we have considered the aims of fascism. None of its aims, finance-capitalism, capitalism, aggressive nationalism, imperialism, the corporate State or racial superiority, is the aim of the Congress, its executive or any of its principal leaders and spokesmen. If in its aims the Indian National Congress comes nowhere near fascism, in its means and methods of work it is diametrically opposed to it. Fascism is nowhere critical of its means. The only condition it lays down is that the means be effective for the end in view. Crooked diplomacy, fraud, bluff and bluster, breaking of plighted word, disregard of treaties,

false and mendacious propaganda are all legitimate weapons in the armoury of the fascist State. More than any other sect in history the fascists believe in the Jesuistic doctrine that the end justifies the means. This doctrine is carried to lengths undreamt of by a Chanakya or a Machiavelli. The fascist doctrine in internal and international politics is never to quibble about the means but to get going and accomplish the immediate aim in view. It combines the cunning of the fox with the claws of the tiger. All this is quite natural to a corporate State which recognises no physical or moral authority outside itself. It is a law into itself and unto others. The standard is set by what is considered by it as desirable. Even its honour is that which is considered beneficial to itself.

As against this the Congress is meticulously careful about its means. For Gandhiji the means are at least as important as the end, if not more. Whenever he has found the means used to be tainted, he has stopped or withdrawn from a struggle even at the risk of the loss of a campaign or his personal prestige. Many times the opponent has taken advantage of his withdrawal at a critical moment from the struggle but Gandhiji has not grudged him this advantage, fortified with the faith, that all will go well with him, his cause and his country, if he is careful and critical about the means he uses. Under his influence and guidance the Congress has adopted its present creed of peaceful and legitimate means. Gandhiji never cares to take advantage of the difficulties of his opponents. This about Gandhiji. The Congress more or less follows his policy and practice. It is quite possible that individual Congressmen may not in their lives attain to the height and the purity of Gandhiji or the Congress creed. But this failure does not make them fascist. Even as the failure of a democratic country to come up to the absolute requirements of an ideally democratic State, does not make it a fascist State, so also the sins of commission and omission of Congressmen regarding the means they employ do not make the Congress a fascist organisation.

Fascism is not failure of democracy and liberalism but something more positive, active and aggressive. It is a creed and an ideology, however wrong the creed and however mistaken the ideology.

The methods by which the fascist parties in Europe have acquired power have never been used by the Congress or its executive to gain the little power that they have at present in the provinces. The fascist method of military *coups* is unknown in Congress history. After a successful *coup*, power is retained by organised propaganda, by continual ostracism and periodical purging, by systematic suppression of the press, platform and organisation. Its judicial system discards any pretence to canons of justice laid down in all modern books on jurisprudence and followed by democratic countries. The Congress has done none of these things. Ever since the advent of Congress Provincial governments the scope of civil liberty has been extended. The press is more free than ever before. The platform is as free and there is equal freedom of association. If there is any complaint, the complaint is that the Congress governments have kept the reins rather too loose and have allowed the communal and class organisations to abuse and take advantage of the new liberty of the press, platform and association granted to them.

In its organisation the fascist State is an hierarchy. In democracy officers are appointed from below in an ascending order. Here they are appointed from above in a descending order. Over them all is the Führer, the Duce or the chosen leader, the superman, the embodiment of the national will. In Congress organisation the officers are filled from below, by democratic elections. The watchwords of fascism are authoritarian leadership, discipline and obedience. The Congress leadership, on the other hand, is handicapped at each step by want of even the minimum discipline and obedience, essential to every organisation. Not only is our organisation loose but our discipline or rather want of it, would shatter into pieces any democracy.

In spite of Gandhiji being acclaimed as a Mahatma, the abuse that is poured upon him openly in the press of some provinces is too shocking and vulgar even to be quoted. While any adverse criticism uttered against the chosen leader in a fascist State would bring immediate retribution, not at the hands of the political authority and the police, but at the hands of the infuriated populace, here all criticism, however uninformed, and abuse, however foul, are considered the mark of emancipation, free-thinking and advanced and radical mentality. All agreement with Gandhiji, however reasonable and however arrived at, is dubbed as blind following, as if only in opposition can free will and choice manifest themselves. It would appear that the only strength possible is in kicking and none in self-control.

Again, war for fascism is a biological necessity. It is also considered inevitable. From communist philosophy the fascist has learnt, that whatever comes to be considered historically inevitable becomes a moral duty to be neglected at one's peril. If war is a historical necessity and is inevitable, it becomes a sacred duty for which the nation must prepare. The whole organisation of the fascist State is therefore designed for war. Even in peaceful times it lives in wartime tension. War is also supposed to be necessary for the cultivation of many desirable virtues such as group spirit and the subordination of the personal ego to the higher ego of the State. War, again, is a training ground for leadership. It brings out bravery, courage, resourcefulness and many other virtues which, but for the periodical war drill, would remain dormant.

The Congress, on the contrary, eschews all war from its present and future purview. For Gandhiji the necessary training for subjugating one's ego, for leadership, courage and all other virtues for which war is supposed by fascism to be the necessary school, is afforded by Satyagraha and the many constructive programmes the Congress has accepted under his guidance. The Congress, as we have already said, stands for internal and international peace and good will.

Therefore, from every point of view, either of theory propounded by the opponents and friends of fascism, or the practice in fascist States, I have tried to show that in no sense of the term good or bad, is the Congress a fascist organisation. Its means, aims, objects and practice, its history and evolution, its leaders and their views, are all democratic. After this, may one hope that whatever the Congress is accused of, it will not be accused of fascism ?

Is there any danger of India turning fascist ? I believe, humanly speaking, there is little chance of it. Fascism, even like communism, is not a universal but a regional creed. Both require for their nourishment and growth a particular tradition, national character and national psychology. Where even the appropriate national atmosphere is wanting, these creeds cannot prosper. In India these totalitarian creeds may not take root, till repeated revolutions have changed the individual and national character of the people.

The Indian is, moreover, too sensitive to spiritual values to be carried away too far for any length of time by a philosophy, whether fascist or Marxist, whose basic urge is derived from obsession with materialistic values. In the really spiritual life the State can only find a subordinate place. Disinterested national service, as with Gandhiji, may be the duty of the individual, but it can never be the supreme good or the final test of virtue. It is therefore that however much Gandhiji loves his nation and however much he is the embodiment of its aspirations, hopes and fears, he never allows any national song, be it ever so refined and inspired, to mar the spiritual atmosphere of his prayers, which are unreservedly offered to the Universal Spirit.

Fascism, therefore, is neither the creed of the Congress, nor its leaders, nor even that of the dominant and majority group in the Congress who derive their light, inspiration and strength from Gandhiji. Its possibilities, even after foreign domination is removed, are strictly limited.

THE COUNTRY OF THE GODS

By Asiaticus

BARON Hiranuma in the first press interview after being nominated to Premiership of the Japanese Cabinet last January, defined the mode of Government in Japan as follows :

"There is much talk of totalitarianism or individualism in Europe at present, but there is neither totalitarianism nor individualism in Japan. Japan has *ten-no-michi* (the Heavenly Way) and nothing else. It is *ten-no-michi* to enable all things to have their proper place. Herein lies the secret of State administration. The Emperor Meiji called this the High Road of the Heaven and Earth. True politics is to pursue this Heavenly Way unfalteringly, free from all self-seeking motives. If any one dares to obstruct Japan in the pursuit of the righteous way, she must resolutely overcome this obstruction. The Japanese people are possessed of the martial spirit and if the other party refuses to listen to reason recourse must be had to force. Japan is thus a country of the Gods, a country of high morality and one in which the martial spirit is held in regard."

In his first speech before the Diet and the House of Peers Baron Hiranuma again dwelled on this "Heavenly Way" and again quoted Emperor Meiji's command to Japan to follow this "just and equitable principle of nature" after casting off "the evil ways of the past." Premier Hiranuma then announced :

"Here we have, I believe, what must be the basis of the government of our country. Here is the great principle which was handed down from the Divine Age by the Imperial Ancestors, and in accordance with which all the Sovereigns of the subsequent ages have ruled the land." ¹

As a comment to these statements of a most authoritative

1. *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, Kobe, January 19, and 26, 1989.

representative of the "Heavenly Way" of the Japanese "State administration", I quote below a less authoritative but nevertheless very real spokesman or rather executant of Japanese policies in Manchuria. The Chief of the Japanese Secret Service in the "independent state Manchoukuo" is reported by Mr. Amleto Vespa, the author of *Secret Agent of Japan* as explaining to him how finally "all things" in Asia will find "their proper place":

"The whole Orient is our sphere of influence and must fall under our control. Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia and before long China and Siberia as far as Irkutsk will all form one single Empire, the Empire of Japan, governed by our great Emperor ; the only Emperor who can be truly called heavenly, since he is a descendant of the Sun Goddess and all the Japanese are sons of Gods. And this is but the first part of the programme of the tasks which the Gods have given to our people. The second phase calls for the conquest of India and of all the islands in the Pacific ; also Siberia as far as the Ural region."

To this the Chief of the Japanese Secret Service added :

"Do not smile at these declarations. The Gods do not lie. The destiny of Japan has been outlined by the Gods. Nothing can stop Japan from becoming the greatest Empire on earth."¹

It is an old feature of Japanese imperialist propaganda that Japan has to fulfil a mission on earth as the "country of the Gods", for which she must carve out for herself the "greatest Empire on earth." But the above quoted statements of Baron Hiranuma, relating the idea of the "country of the Gods" to the "secret of State administration" and the "basis of government" is more than this old imperialist propaganda. It indicates a project, or rather an outline of action, for Fascist "reorganisation" of the Japanese State, for final emergence in Japan of an anti-democratic and dictatorial State bent on conquest. The Japanese military who are now ever more monopolising the command over the internal policies of Japan, just as they alone are deciding

1. *Secret Agent of Japan*, by Amleto Vespa, 1938, Victor Gollancz, Ltd. London, p. 58.

her foreign policies, take recourse to a peculiar way in order to get rid of the last democratic remnants in Japan. They turn to religion, to a cult of glorification, in fact deification of Japanese imperialism, a cult which they themselves have purposely created only some decades ago as a safeguard against a possible development of democratic constitutionalism in Japan. Long before the era of Mussolini and Hitler, the Japanese military tried to check the influx of democratic ideas into Japan and the rise of democratic and workers' movements, apart from cruel presecution campaigns staged by the police and gendarmerie, by the creation of a "totalitarian" religion which combined the primitive idea of a god-man ruler of a tribe with the total subordination of the people to the "martial spirit", i. e. the military, and the programme of imperialist conquest. Baron Hiranuma was among the most prominent advocates of shaping the system of government in Japan along this "totalitarian" religion of Japanese imperialism, in order to preserve what they called the true "national constitution of Japan" in contradistinction to "Western" democratic ideas which were declared as not fit for the "national character" of the Japanese race.

How this religion was created, by whom and for what purpose, was, as early as 1912, masterly described in a pamphlet by Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain of the Imperial University at Tokyo.¹ Prof. B. H. Chamberlain recorded, in that pamphlet that it was the governing bureaucracy in Japan, by which term he meant the military and official bureaucracy centred round the Court, which was then just busy inventing or manufacturing a religion for the end "to subserve practical worldly purposes." This new religion is *ten-no-michi*, Mikado-worship and Japan-worship. Prof. B. H. Chamberlain wrote there on the process of this religion-making :

"Every manufacture presupposes a material out of which

1. *The Invention of a New Religion*, by B. H. Chamberlain, London, Watts & Co., 1912.

it is made, every present a past on which it rests. But the twentieth-century Japanese religion of loyalty and patriotism is quite new, for in it pre-existing ideas have been sifted, altered, freshly compounded, turned to new uses, and have found a new centre of gravity. Not only it is new, it is not yet completed ; it is still in process of being consciously or semi-consciously put together by the official class, in order to serve the interests of that class. . . .”

The principal idea was “to focus everything upon imperialism.” The superiority of the Japanese race had to be “proved” as to its divine origin, the possession of the oldest history and, of course, the oldest culture and civilization. This was achieved by rewriting history, mingling it with mythological legends, and filling the gaps by borrowing in a most liberal manner from Chinese history. Thus, for instance, while it is one of the certain results of investigation, even according to Japanese scholars, that the first glimmer of genuine Japanese history dates from 500 after Christ, it is taught in the Japanese schools that the present Japanese monarchy was founded in 660 before Christ. Moreover, “the speeches put into the mouths of ancient Mikados are centos culled from the Chinese classics ; . . . their names are in some cases derived from Chinese sources ; . . . moral ideals, which were of common knowledge derived from the teachings of the Chinese sages, are now arbitrarily referred to the ‘Imperial Ancestors’.”

One of the most important motives behind this religion-making was to prove that the Emperor as a divine leader of the Japanese race—and especially his most precious jewel, the Fighting Services of the Army and Navy of which he is the head and they in turn the most trusted guardians of the Emperor-worship—is beyond reproach from the side of democratic institutions of the Japanese people. So it is taught that “from the earliest ages, perfect concord has always subsisted in Japan between beneficent sovereigns on the one hand, and a gratefully loyal people on the other,” and that “never has Japan been soiled by

the disobedient and rebellious acts common in other countries." To establish this fundamental, Shintoism, a primitive nature cult of ancient Japan, "which had fallen into discredit, was taken out of its cupboard and dusted." For it was a Shinto doctrine, "that the Mikado descends in direct succession from the native Goddess of the Sun, and that he himself is a living God on earth who justly claims the absolute fealty of his subjects."

As a matter of course the Mikado is "divinely superior to the common ruck of kings and emperors." The governments of Japan can only be regarded as the executants of the supreme authority of the divine Emperor, or, as Baron Hiranuma put it in the above quoted statement, "the Heavenly Way is the secret of the Japanese State administration." Such ideas as rights of the people to determine the policies of the State are already sacrilegious, as only the Emperor and the executants of his authority can know the "Heavenly Way" and have the virtue to define its course. The Emperor may grant constitutions and laws as his free gifts to the people but never can these gifts be utilised for interference with the Emperor's trusted bureaucracy and especially with the Fighting Services which are direct instruments of the Emperor for carrying out the heavenly mission of the "country of the Gods" on earth. From this it is also easy to infer that organs of the people's will should never be allowed a position to come between the Emperor and the official bureaucracy, or the Emperor and the Army.

Prof. B. H. Chamberlain quoted in his pamphlet Baron Oura, Japanese Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, who stated in 1911 :

"That the majesty of our Imperial House towers high above everything to be found in the world, and that it is durable as heaven and earth is too well known to need dwelling on here. . . . If it is considered that our country needs a religious faith, then, I say, let it be converted to a belief in the religion of patriotism and loyalty, the religion of imperialism—in other words, the Emperor-worship."

The Japanese "religion of Imperialism" was in 1912, as Prof. B. H. Chamberlain pointed out, still in the making and in its early stage. At that time the impact of democratic ideas on the Japanese people was already very strong and the trend towards democratic constitutionalism was an ever growing popular force, as proved also by a powerful democratic movement among students and professors in the Japanese universities and high schools. The "religion of Imperialism" was then manufactured and imposed upon the nation, upon the temples, schools and the press, in order to create a barrier against further growth of democratic ideals and prepare for liquidation of democratic rights and institutions formerly granted as "gifts to the people." The latter were branded as being a foreign intrusion detrimental to the peculiar national characteristics of the Japanese race, and an attack upon Japanese traditions. The doctrine of the eternal Imperial House, which allegedly reigned over the Japanese subjects from time immemorial as a rule handed down from the divine age, when the native Gods had first created Japan and only afterwards the "rest" of our globe,—this doctrine, declared as a national religion, was to prove that the ancient Japanese institution of beneficent sovereigns with absolute power was perfect, unchangeable and vastly superior to any "Western" form of socio-political organisation. The main virtue of the Japanese sovereigns was for obvious reasons said to be in their military valour, which was thus made a cardinal point in their divinity. "All military successes," as Prof. B. H. Chamberlain stated, "were ascribed to the miraculous influence of the Emperor's virtue, and to the virtues of His Imperial and divine ancestors—that is, of former Emperors and of Shinto deities." To this it was added that the Japanese nation while following the path decided for them by the Gods is "sharing to some extent in the supernatural virtues of its rulers," thus becoming the "land of the Gods," created for conquest of other countries declared as inferior. Prof. B. H. Chamberlain, while stressing the fact that this religion was purposely invented, stated :

"Such is the fabric of ideas which the official class is busy building up by every means in its power, including the punishment of those who presume to stickle for historic truth."

In this connection it is interesting to remind oneself of the conflicts between this "religion of Imperialism" and Christianity, and to show how the propaganda of this religion was organised. The religions of Shintoism and Buddhism were declared in accordance with the national traditions, while Christianity was attacked in spite of the "religious liberty" assured in the Japanese Constitution after the Meiji Reform. The reason for this attack was not that the Christian missions were not ready to adapt their preachings to the Japanese "religion of Imperialism," as was done by the ecclesial authorities of Shintoism and Buddhism and also by the schools. The fact of the invention and propaganda of the new religion was to remain a secret, especially for abroad, and therefore had to be guarded against the Christian church which was an international institution.

Les Nouvelles Religieuses, a Roman Catholic Journal of Paris, had published in 1918 a series of articles on "The National Cult of Japan,"¹ where it was reported that the Japanese Ministers of War and Education had issued secret instructions to officers and teachers, pointing out to them the danger that Christianity meant for the national cult of Japan, besides ordering a public campaign through newspapers and special publications against conversion to Christianity.

A few characteristic accusations against Christianity, some of them striking in similarity to the anti-Catholic propaganda of the German Nazis, may be quoted here. It was, for instance, maintained throughout all these publications that there cannot be any authority higher than that of the Emperor, this being the faith of the Soul of Japan. The organisation of the Japanese

1. *The National Cult of Japan*, Roman Catholic study of its opposition to evangelisation; pamphlet out of articles translated and reprinted by *Japan Chronicle*, July 20/21, 1918.

race was said to be unique in the whole world, as the whole Japanese people is like one great family under the paternal ægis of the Emperor, who alone (apart from his ancestors) can be the object of supreme veneration and worship. To place above him "one true God", as the Christians do, was said to be "absolutely incompatible with the Japanese national constitution." The national and patriotic morality of Japan would conflict with Christian morality, as this religion creates a parallel civil and religious authority which is "like a double nervous system in one organism." Further interpretations were that the "nexus of the national unity lies in the authority, the religion, of the Emperor," that only he is the living God as he is "the crystallisation of our national ideal." The Emperor, therefore, is divinity made manifest, while Christianity with its doctrine of one God, and of man universally fallen into sin, was "in the highest degree injurious to the Emperor's sacred majesty."

Scores of newspapers were thus exposing the "rebellious Christians", while "certain Ministerial instructions" were addressed "to military officers, to school-masters, and to Shinto and to Buddhist priests", which resulted in an abundance of anti-Christian propaganda, official pressure, vexations, etc. One young Christian girl was not allowed to enter the Normal School, "because she replied conscientiously to the question, "Whom do you regard as highest, your God or the Emperor?" Finally, Christian propaganda was accused of being connected with the diffusion of ideas "subversive of the social order" at a time when "socialist and democratic theories became so suspect that even the name was sufficient reason for prosecution." The main idea behind this propaganda and enforcement of the national cult as well as the main reason for this anti-Christian campaign was to assure that "the Empire could continue without a shock its progressive march towards its ideal of power and expansion." The writer of the articles, published in 1918, while deploring "the gradual advance of Japan towards Caesarism", sees the religious liberty threatened in Japan and appeals to the Catholic

and Liberal Press in Europe to assist the cause of religious tolerance in Japan.

The Ministers of War and Navy have a unique and commanding position in the Japanese Cabinet as they are nominated by the Staffs of Generals and Admirals and from the active Generals and Admirals themselves, and are responsible only to these Staffs with the Emperor as their direct head. The Cabinet must resign if the Minister of War or of the Navy is recalled by the respective Staffs, and a nominated Premier (by the Emperor) can only then succeed to form a new Cabinet if the Staffs are ready to nominate their Ministers. The Emperor is a divine being "high in the clouds", the living God on earth and the supreme authority within the national cult of Japan, whose reign is executed by his trusted representatives, among whom the Army and Navy Staffs are the principal ones, an organisation with absolute authority in itself, and thus in fact deciding as well as representing the "true will" of the Emperor. Of course, they are also the first in the Emperor-worship and they regard themselves as the most responsible for the enforcement of the national cult throughout the Empire and for assuring that participation in this cult is considered as the accomplishment of both religious and civic duty by every Japanese subject. Thus they are also responsible for the "education" of the people, and the policies of the Education Ministry must therefore be closely in line with the propaganda of the Ministry of War. When Tatsukichi Minobe, Member of the Imperial Academy and Professor at the Tokyo University, committed the "Crime" in his writings by defining the institution of the Crown as an "organ of the State", the Minister of War led the campaign on the "Minobe affair" and decided his punishment by dismissal from the Academy and University and exclusion from the House of Peers. Prof. Minobe, now in his seventies, has recently started practice as a lawyer in Tokyo, in order to defend his son, also a University Professor, who is among the victims of General Araki's campaign for cleaning out the "popular front" followers

from the Japanese educational institutions. General Araki, Minister of Education since 1936, has only recently dismissed 15 professorial instructors from the Tokyo University alone, in his campaign for "ideal universities", as he stated before the Diet. During his reign as Education Minister the Japanese prisons are populated with "purged" professors, students and writers.

Both Baron Hiranuma and General Araki are the most prominent champions and political high priests of "re-establishment" of the alleged original Japanese "national constitution" with the national cult as the basis, while General Araki's special feature is the advocacy of the Japanese mission of world conquest as a religious task of the divine nation. Baron Hiranuma's promotion to Premiership has signalled that the Japanese military regard the time as opportune for a final emergence of the Japanese Fascist State for which the stage is all set, including the ready-made worship of imperialism as the sole national religion on which Hitler and Mussolini are still labouring. In Japan this religion of imperialism is nothing else than the Fascist political philosophy, similar to what the Nazis term the true German "Weltanschauung". The Japanese military are worshipping themselves and their aims of world conquest in their religion of imperialism. They mobilise the national churches and worshippers of the national cult in order to stigmatise any defence of constitutional rights of political parties and the electorate as a religious sacrilege against the Emperor and all the Gods of Japan. The manufacturing of the Japanese religion of imperialism, which Prof. B. H. Chamberlain described in 1912 as being then still in its early stage, is thus to become complete through the cleaning out of all democratic remnants from the Japanese State.

This religion of imperialism, this national constitution with the divine military in dictatorial position who are determining the Heavenly Way of the Japanese State administration in their military, economic and "educational" policies and campaigns, all bent on conquest, consist essentially of the same elements as

Nazi-ism. The only difference is in the "race" and "national outlook" which account for the fact that to the Japanese it is they and not, as Hitler once said, "the white men", who are "destined to rule", and that the start on their path of world conquest is the "new Order in Asia" instead of, as with Hitler and Mussolini, the "reorganisation of Europe." Nevertheless Baron Hiranuma was right in saying that Japan has *ten-no-michi* and nothing else. This *ten-no-michi* is taught in Japanese schools in the following version, as quoted in the already mentioned Roman Catholic study:

"His Majesty the Emperor's first ancestor was the Great Goddess of Celestial Light. Like the rays of the sun his dignity reaches to the highest summits of sublimity and to the furthest limits of universality. Our Empire of Japan is that which in the beginning the great Goddess placed under the governance of her grandson, Ninigi-no-mikoto. When she deigned to descend upon it she said: 'This Earth is the Empire which I give to my Imperial Posterity. Go, then, and govern it.' "

In a Japanese propaganda booklet, recently issued in Tokyo, *Working the Miracle of the Twentieth Century*,¹ published in English, i. e., for enlightening the foreign public, obviously with the approval of the Education (Propaganda) Ministry headed by General Araki, we find the above primitive version of *ten-no-michi* presented, as far as possible, in the "modern" Fascist terminology. We are told there that Japan as a nation whom the Gods have appointed as their agent to perform a great duty on earth was first chastened, starved and browbeaten that she may be "purged of all earthly impurities, and be strong and ready for the sacred mission." This time has now come, and the crusading zeal of a new evangelist, "a zest for new life and expansion on the continent," is stirring the rising generation of Japan. "The Japanese of to-day may be regarded as one of the nations most fit to survive in the world, moulded by centuries of

1. *Working the Miracle of the Twentieth Century*, by a Japanese, The Rimpō Kyōkai, Tokyo, 1988.

selecting, purging and refining." The elements of strength of the Japanese people are homogeneity of race ; the patriarchal family system ; the unique organisation of the whole people as one family united in "implicit faith, absolute obedience and spontaneous veneration" of the Emperor ; military power ; and the moral incentives, *viz.*, the willingness to accept the burden of a holy war in Asia.

This "holy war" is one for "liberation" of the Asiatic "brethren" from foreign chains and exploitation, which idea is served in this booklet in the following version :

"The thought that Japan alone is happy at the feast of privileged banqueters while her brethren are left outside, crying for the crumbs falling from the table—this is enough to spoil your appetite—to urge you to be up and doing something for the hapless brethren out in the cold. . . . It may cause misgivings to the world, even to China herself, but Japan will be understood in the end. . . . A well-known historian has recently declared in elucidating the present situation in China that it only means that a portion of the Japanese are now returning to the old home from which they had come, in order to assimilate, and be assimilated with, their brethren of long ago."

In another book by a high diplomatic official, *The Goal of Japanese Expansion*,¹ we read again that Japan has "a moral obligation not to leave China a prize for endless international rivalries but to rescue her from the state of a quasi-colony of Occidental Powers" ; Japan's emergence as a new living force was the "opening page of the history of the Asiatic race" ; and in China she begins its "main chapter". She is creating a "new Asiatic system" where Japan will be the victor and the leader ; however, she will neither monopolise the advantages nor leave the Asiatic peoples in the position of vanquished. Of course, to the Europeans this may seem incomprehensible because Japanese philosophy of chivalry is alien to European egoism and the doctrine

1. *The Goal of Japanese Expansion*, by Tatsuo Kawai, Director of the Information Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry ; The Hokuseido Press, Tokyo, 1939.

of opposing rights and interests.” The author predicts that with a Japanese victory in Asia the “world politics of tomorrow” will be decided by politico-cultural regional groups independent in their three continental spheres, “each group promoting the peace and welfare of its own sphere.”

In fact, all these slogans of Pan-Asiaticism, Japanese leadership of the “Asiatic race” and the so-called Monroe Doctrine for Asia, are nothing but timely attributes of the Japanese imperialist and Fascist ambition of world conquest. Nor is it different with the present Japanese complementary mission to “liberate” the world from the menace of the Comintern, in alliance with the European Fascist aggressors, regarding which menace Mr. Arita, the Japanese Foreign Minister, has recently told the Japanese Diet (in his speech on January 21st, 1939) that “in Europe and in Asia wherever there is any disturbance of peace and order, there is invariably the hand of the Comintern behind the scenes.”

Meanwhile the war of resistance by the united Chinese nation is already for two years holding and exhausting the aggressive power of the “country of the Gods,” in spite of the Heavenly Way which is the secret of the Japanese State administration. The Great Powers which have possessions and interests in Asia and the Pacific are likewise not thinking of surrender to the Japanese “liberation” mission, and the god-sent Samurais have even been taught a painful lesson concerning the respect of the territory of other nations in the very neighbourhood of Korea and Japan proper, at Changkuofeng. But Baron Hiranuma is sure that Japan will overcome all those who dare “to obstruct Japan in the pursuit of the righteous way.” Or, as he stated it in his introductory speech as the Premier of Japanese Cabinet :

“As for those who persist in their opposition against Japan, we have no other alternative than to exterminate them.”

The German ex-Emperor Wilhelm II., not long before his downfall from the summit of Caesarism, also said: “Whoever will dare to stand in my way will be smashec.”

STRAY THOUGHTS RECALLED

[*The following stray thoughts from the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, though written long ago, seem so much like comments on this crazy world of today that no apology need be rendered for filling a blank page with their wisdom.—Editor.]*

History slowly smothers truth, but hastily struggles to revive it in a terrible penance of pain.

The world suffers most from the disinterested tyranny of its well-wishers.

The man proud of his sect thinks that he has the sea ladled into his private pond.

To bear the cost of the instrument and never to know that it is for music, is the tragedy of life's deafness.

The clumsiness of power spoils the key and uses the pickaxe.

Emancipation from the bondage of the soil is no freedom for the tree.

Flower, have pity for the worm : it is not a bee, its love is a blunder and a burden.



SHESHER KABITA

A Novel by Rabindranath Tagore*

INTRODUCTION

[SHESHER KABITA, *lit.* Last Poem, is a novel originally written in Bengali in 1928. Its modern setting, its playful mocking tone, the author's trick of introducing himself as the subject of the hero's merciless criticism, the brilliant sparkling wit of the dialogue, and the final tragic note voiced in the beautiful poem which gives the book its title,—all these won for the novel an immediate popularity with the youthful public. Some of its admirers even acclaimed it as the best of the author's novels ; but the enthusiasm of the young, and specially the modern young, must be accepted with considerable caution. The novel is undoubtedly clever and entertaining, but to regard it as better than Gora or The Home and the World or Broken Ties, is like conceding that a novel by Aldous Huxley is better than any that Meredith or Hardy ever wrote. However, literary values can never be absolute. To each the pleasure of his choice.

The author draws an amusing picture of an ultra-modern Bengali intellectual, whose Oxford education, while providing him with a superiority complex, has induced in him a craze for conscious originality which results in a deliberate and frivolous contrariness to all accepted opinion and convention. His aggressive self-complacency, however, receives a shock when, as the result of an accidental meeting, he falls in love with, and wins in return the heart of, a quite different product of modern culture—a highly educated girl of fine sensibility and deep feelings. This love, being more or less genuine and different from his previous experiences of coquetry, releases his own submerged depth of sincerity, which he finds hard to adjust to the habits of sophistry and pose, practised so long. In the process he manages to strike a new romantic attitude. The struggle, however, makes of him a

curiously pathetic creature, as one being worked against his grain. The tragedy is understood by the girl who releases him from his troth and disappears from his life. The last poem which she addresses to the hero gives evidence of the depth of feeling of which she was capable.

Much more than the development of the plot of the novel, it is the form of its presentation, the half-lyrical, half-mocking tone of the narrative, which give the novel its distinction. Unfortunately, it is precisely these virtues which, as it were, evaporate in the process of being rendered in an alien medium like English, whose spirit and idiom are so entirely different from those of the original. However, what has been found possible to retain is here presented, with the hope that the reader will not judge the novel without having read the original Bengali version.—Editor]

CHAPTER I

Concerning Amit

AMIT RAI is a barrister. When this Bengali surname, under the stress of English accent, underwent a change into Roy and Ray, its beauty, no doubt, was marred, but its patrons increased. Finding this growing vogue a little too commonplace, Amit saw to it that his English friends distinguished his surname as Rayé.

Amit's father who had been a barrister with, as they say, a roaring practice, had left enough patrimony to safeguard the debauchery of three successive generations ; but, somehow, Amit managed to stand the impact of this terrible stroke of "good fortune." Even before his graduation here, he went over to Oxford, where he flirted with examinations for seven whole years. His native wit helped to conceal the fact that he had been indifferent to learning. However, his father had expected nothing extraordinary from him beyond the assurance that his Oxford dye should be able to stand the native wash.

I like Amit. Fine fellow. I am a new writer with only a limited number of readers ; and, among them, I count Amit the most intelligent. He allows himself to be carried away by the glamour of my style, having convinced himself that no other literary celebrity in our tongue has any style whatsoever. The desert land of our Bengali literature is made conspicuous by the loose, disjointed shambling of its awkward-gaited beasts of burden. Let me hasten to assure the critics, the opinion is not mine.

My brother-in-law, Nabakrishna, never could relish these sayings of Amit and would burst out : "Oh, these Oxonians !" He was himself a prodigious M. A. in English literature, hugely loaded with unassimilated matter. That day he opined : "Amit magnifies the mediocre only to belittle the masters. And you are the drumstick with which he is beating on his drum of insolence." However, even my wife in whose presence this judgment was

delivered, remained unconvinced by her brother's wisdom. Although not well-read, she seemed to appreciate Amit's opinions. Strange, the way women understand without knowing !

Sometimes I too would wonder whether there was not something suspicious in Amit's undaunted zeal to run down well-known authors. Since such authors are like hall-marked ware for the multitude, it is not necessary to read them to celebrate them. And so Amit too did not find it necessary to read them to desecrate them. He despised them as he despised the public waiting-room at a railway junction, while the authors discovered by him gave him the thrill of travelling in a private saloon of a special train.

Amit's intoxication with *style* was manifest not only in his choice of authors but also in his choice of dress and manners. His appearance had a distinction which marked him out in any company, not as one of the five, but as the absolute Fifth, who obliterated the rest. His round, clean-shaven face was set in a complexion of dark lustre, and his brilliancy of mind was well attested by the sparkle in his eye, his playful smile and the ever-changing expressiveness of his movements. His retorts flashed quick like sparks from flint. His Bengali dress was fashioned to a striking combination of contrariness to custom and quaintness of style. It was less of an attire than a flare of fun. The principle of his English costume is not quite comprehensible, —some call it just loose and deliberately careless, although it is said that somewhere in England it is called "distinguished". His was not the way of a fop ; rather he meant to hold up fashion to ridicule. There are too many young men who have to prove their youth with their birth certificates. Amit's was of that rare kind which carries its testimony in its sheer youthfulness, at once extravagant and irresponsible, like a flood that overflows, letting nothing accumulate, sweeping everything along.

Amit had two sisters, whose pet-names were Cissie and Lissie. They were absolutely the latest brand,—from head to foot,

smartly wrapped ware in the showcase of fashion. They tripped along on high heels and wore their *saris* tight and oblique-wise, dangling on their bare necks beads of coral and amber. Their voices were trained to subtle intonations and their laughter matched the coquettish play of their mouths and quick side-long glances. They could look soulful too, and fluttering their rose-painted fans near their cheeks, they would perch on the arms of their male friends' chairs and after provoking them into impertinence would hint their protest by tapping them with the fans.

Amit's familiarity with the girls of his set was such as to excite the jealousy of his male acquaintances. His gallantry, however, was not limited. He did not seem to be particularly struck by any one; and, therefore, the prodigality of his attentions extended to all of the fair sex alike. It might be said of him that he was not affected by women and yet was enthusiastic about them.

Amit kept social engagements, played cards, lost stakes when he so chose, and had a way of importuning a bad singer to repeat her performance; and, if he saw one in an absurdly-coloured *sari*, would enthusiastically enquire the whereabouts of the dealer. He would bring to every acquaintance a note of intimacy; no one, however, was deceived by it, for all knew that this intimacy was of one who enjoyed the perfection of his own pose. The gods are never deceived by a votary who worships many gods and exalts each in turn as the Most High; and yet they are pleased. And so the daughters, though their mothers might cling to hopes of a fortunate end, have long since been convinced that Amit's attention had as much permanence in it as the glow of the sunset cloud. He ventured so daringly because his intimacies were inconsequential, and feared no proximities because, even if explosives were near, he was determined to yield no spark.

That day during a picnic Amit was sitting beside Lilie Ganguli on the bank of the Ganges. The moon rose above the dark solemn stillness of the distant bank beyond. Amit whispered :

"Lilie ! the rising moon on that side, and you and I on this side, such an instant will not repeat itself in eternity."

Lilie's heart gave a jump but she stayed it, knowing that the words were true only in the sense that they were true to form. To expect more was to trust the play of colour on a bubble to abide. Shaking herself free from that instant's fascination, Lilie laughed and said, "Amit, what you said is so obvious that you needn't have said it at all. This instant that saw that frog leap into the water will also not repeat itself in eternity."

Amit laughed : "There's a difference, Lilie. A tremendous difference. The frog's antic was an alien impertinence in this twilight. But you and I and the moon, the flow of the Ganges, and the stars in the heavens—are all blended in one wonder of harmony, like Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. This exquisite instant,—it is as though the celestial Jeweller, in a frenzy of fancy, wrought a golden ring of rounded perfection, bright with diamond, emerald and sapphire, and, even as he completed it, dropped it into the ocean, never to be recovered."

"Why worry then, Amit, since it is not you who have to meet the bill of the Jeweller ?"

"Just think, Lilie," went on Amit, "if after millions of ages we again met in the shade of the golden woods of Mars and as we stood on the bank of a vast lake, the ancient fisherman in *Sakuntala*¹ recovered for us from the inside of the classic fish the golden wonder of this instant, and we were startled into a mutual beholding—then, then, Lilie, what might not happen !"

"Then," said Lilie, giving Amit a light stroke of her fan, "the golden moment will again be lost to us in the sea, never to be recovered. So many of such instants, wrought by that frenzied Jeweller, have been thus lost to you—you have forgotten them, Amit, for you kept no count."

1. Allusion to the incident in Kalidas's famous drama, where the recovery of a lost ring from the inside of a fish brings back to the king the memory of his courtship of *Sakuntala*.

Saying this, Lilie hurriedly rose and joined her girl friends. This episode is typical of Amit's eventful life.

"Why don't you get married, Amit?" asked his sisters, Cissie and Lissie.

"Why ask me?" answered Amit. "What complicates this business of getting married is not any deficiency in the man, but the problem of finding the woman."

"Woman!" exclaimed Cissie, "why, there are enough of them to choose from."

"In ancient times," opined Amit, "a woman was appropriate in marriage if her planetary patrons were auspicious.¹ I want one who is auspicious because she is appropriate. Acknowledged in herself because she is unique."

"But, as part of your home," put in Cissie, "she will be acknowledged through you, and will no longer be isolated in herself."

"Home!" cried Amit. "She is nowhere near the threshold even. She flashes into the region of my vision like a meteor and is lost in the atmosphere there before she can enter an earthly home."

"In other words," said Cissie, "she can never be likened to your sisters."

"In other words," affirmed Amit, "she comes not as a mere addition to the family."

"We know, Cissie," interposed Lissie, "that Bimmie Bose is waiting only for a nod from Amit to hurry to him. Now why doesn't he accept her? Says, she lacks culture—she who stood first in M.Sc. with Botany. Why, isn't learning culture?"

"The stone in a diamond," answered Amit, "is what I call learning; the sparkle in it is culture. The one weighs, the other shines."

1. Alludes to the custom of parents consulting the horoscopes of their children, rather than their wishes, while arranging the match.

Lissie flared up, "Oh ! Bimmie Bose is not good enough for him !—as though he himself is a marvel of worth. Now, even if he gets crazy over her, I shall warn her never even to look at him."

"Yes," retorted Amit, "unless I did get crazy, why ever should I wish to marry her ! And if I am reduced to that state, think rather of some proper asylum than of Bimmie Bose for me."

Amit's friends and relatives have given up all hope of his ever getting married. They are convinced that his habit of shocking people by his paradoxes and his impossible dreams on the topic of marriage are only a characteristic way of picturesquely evading marital responsibility.

In the meantime, Amit is busy with his smart nothings : entertains all sorts of acquaintances at Firpo's, takes friends out for aimless drives at all hours of the day ; buys all sorts of unnecessaries and parts with them in fits of indiscriminate generosity ; loves to buy English books and loves to forget them at his friends' houses where they remain.

What exasperated his sisters most in Amit was his habit of indulging in contrariness to accepted opinions. In any decent company he is sure to say something which will scandalise the good taste or cherished beliefs of all present.

One day he cut short the panegyric of a learned enthusiast on democracy by remarking, "When the lifeless form of Sati¹ was cut into pieces by Vishnu, a hundred or more places of pilgrimage sprang up, here, there, everywhere, wherever her dismembered limbs fell. In the same way, our democracy is today engaged in worshipping the scattered fragments of a dead aristocracy. And petty aristocrats are rising up in answer to that invocation everywhere : political aristocrats, literary aristocrats, social aristocrats, —all of them spurious for none of them are themselves."

1. Consort of Siva. Allusion to a well-known *puranic* myth.

Another day when a zealous champion of feminism was flourishing a diatribe against a social system which allows man to tyrannise over woman, Amit, gently removing his cigarette from his lips, interposed, "Once man's masterfulness is removed, woman's will begin. The dictatorship of the weak over the strong would be monstrous."

All the feminists present burst out in one scandalised cry : "How's that, pray ?"

Amit answered : "Those who command chains bind with chains, that is, they must first overpower. But those who command no chains drug their victims with opium, that is, they must dement. The first, indeed, bind but they do not delude ; the second delude as well as bind. Women carry opiates in their bags, and Nature's devilry keeps up the supply."

One day at a meeting of a Ballygunge literary group the subject of discussion happened to be the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. It was the first occasion on which Amit had agreed to preside, and he had gone there fully determined to give battle. The speaker was a harmless representative of the old order, struggling to prove that Tagore's poetry was genuine poetry. Excepting one or two professors, all seemed to agree that the proofs were fairly convincing. Then rose the President and spoke :

"Each season of life yields its characteristic fruit. Let no poet extend the harvest time of poesy beyond its natural limit, which is from twenty-five to thirty. When the season of mangoes is over, we'll make no futile demands for better mangoes. Rather, we would ask for good custard-apples. The green coconuts which flow with sweet milk last only for a short season ; but once they have ripened and their milk condensed, they keep for ever so long. And so the poet's life which flows with sweet melody must needs be short ; the philosopher's knows no limit. . . .

"The strongest objection against Rabindranath Tagore is

that this gentleman, imitating old Wordsworth, insists on continuing. Many a time the messenger of Death has called to switch off the light, but, even as the old man rises from his seat, he still seems to cling to its arms. If then he doesn't give way of his own grace, it becomes our duty to quit his court in a body. The one who will come next will also enter in triumph, shouting aggressively that there shall be no end to his supremacy. Like a new god, he will defy all divinities. For a time, his devotees will fete him and adore him and do him obeisance until the auspicious hour of sacrifice arrives when the devotees will clamour for liberation from the bondage of their devotion. The primitive people know that in order to immortalise their heroes they should be sacrificed in time.

"Devotion too must have its evolution. If it remains rigidly fixed at its post, beyond its term, 'tis because it is not aware that life in it is extinct. It needs a little aggression from the outside to prove that sentimentalism has been delaying the burial rites too long, and so robbing the living heirs of their rightful succession. That is why I have sworn to expose before the public this illicit conspiracy of the Tagorites."

Our Manibhusan broke out, flashing his spectacles :

"Would you then banish loyalty from love of literature ?"

"Absolutely. The cult of literary dictatorship is fast becoming obsolete. My second contention against the poet Tagore is that his creations, even like his handwriting, are full of curves, reminding one of roses, and female forms and floating moons. Primitive ! Trying so to copy Nature's idioms. From the new literary dictator we expect creations, straight and sharp—like thorns, like arrows, like spear-heads. Not like fragile flowers, but like the lightning flash and the pain of neuralgia ; piercing and angular like a Gothic church, not rounded like a mosque dome ; not self-complacent but aggressive, even if they be crude like a jute-mill or a government secretariat

"Let us disenchant ourselves from the witchery of musical forms. If every dream-mad architect had fashioned a Taj Mahal

and India had been strewn over with these marble bubbles, then the very excess of enchantment would have led our imagination into an insanity of perfectness."

(It must be mentioned here that, under the impact of arguments which he could not comprehend, the reporter's head was in a whirl. His report proved to be even more incomprehensible than Amit's speech. A few bits which could be rescued have been reproduced above.)

At the reference to the Taj one of the devotees of Tagore flared up, with a flushed face: "There can never be enough of good things."

"Quite the contrary," retorted Amit. "In the order of Providence, scarcity creates excellence, which excess degrades to mediocrity. The poet who is not ashamed to stick on to life for sixty or seventy years cheapens himself and in that cheapness carries his own chastisement. Spuriously enriched through pilferings from his own past, his later creations lose all character, and the poet himself becomes a mere receiver of stolen goods. In such cases the very interest of humanity imposes upon the reading public the obligation not to let these aged futilities linger on—poetically, of course, not physically. Let them fill up the rest of their lives as old professors, as old politicians, as old critics, as the case may be."

The fore-mentioned speaker put in, "May we know who your new literary dictator might be? His name?"

Amit burst out, "Nibaran Chakravarty."

"Nibaran Chakravarty!" came the chorus of surprised voices. "Who might he be?"

"This question," answered Amit, "will bring forth in time its own answer like a little seed fulfilling itself in a mighty tree."

"In the meantime, we would like to have a specimen."

"Then listen." Saying which, Amit drew out of his pocket a long thin canvas-bound note-book and began to read:

I am the Singular

among the multitude of passers-by,

*a new expression
 flung out by a shout of laughter
 of the uncouth god Demos. . . .
 etc. etc.¹*

The Tagorites were silenced for the day and departed, though not without a threat to resume the controversy in the papers.

After this successful rout of his audience, when Amit was returning home in his car, Cissie remarked, "You made good use of this invention of yours—this Nibaran Chakravarty—to confound those good people."

Amit answered, "To hasten the advent of the unarrived is to act like Providence. It is Providence's part that I have played to-day. This day Nibaran Chakravarty is born to actuality. Henceforth his march will be irresistible."

Cissie felt a secret pride in her brother. She asked, "Do you sit up every morning and fashion your stock of smart sayings for the day?"

"To keep prepared for possibilities," replied her brother, "is the way of civilisation. To get caught unawares is the mark of barbarism. That too is jotted down somewhere in my notebook."

"But have you no convictions of your own, Amit,—always eager to match the wit of the moment?"

Amit replied, "Were I to smear the mirror of my mind with convictions of my own, it would no longer reflect the image of each fleeting moment."

"Well, then, let shadows make up the substance of your life."

1. The original is a fairly long poem of which only the first stanza is rendered above. There are several such pieces interspersed in the original version which the author has ascribed to his imaginary rival. Since their irony and significance can only be appreciated by readers familiar with modern Bengali poetry, they have either been entirely omitted or merely quoted in part here.

CHAPTER II

The Collision

AMIT at last decided to go to Shillong for his holidays. Two reasons had influenced his decision : none of his set ever went there, and nor was the hunting of eligible bride-grooms so very aggressive in that quarter. The particular divine Archer who used Amit's heart for his target practice, had his range limited to the fashionable area ; and among all the pleasure resorts on the hills, Shillong offered the least scope for his pranks. Amit's sisters had declared their minds with a firm shake of their heads at this proposal of his : "You may go by yourself if you so decide. Neither of us can accompany."

They kept their threat. And with dainty, up-to-date parasols under their left arms and tennis rackets swinging in their right hands, the sisters left for Darjeeling. Bimmie Bose had already preceded them. When, however, she saw the sisters arrive without their brother, she discovered the fact that in Darjeeling there was crowd but no company.

Amit had announced to everybody that he was going to Shillong to enjoy solitude. Before long, however, he discovered that the absence of the crowd somehow took the relish off the solitude. Amit had no fancy for out-dooring with the camera. He declared he was not of the tourist kind. He must feel with his mind the flavour of the sights ; merely to swallow them visually was not his way.

He succeeded in whiling away a few days in reading on the hill-slopes under the shade of the pines. In between his fits of desultory study and of lassitude there would flash in, now and then, a sense of the beauty of the hills and the woods,—not sufficient however, to flare up as a vision. A fundamental lack of unity in his universe always produced in Amit a sense of uneasiness wherever he was, though in town he could somehow manage

to beguile it away. He therefore made up his mind to turn his back on those mountains and tramp through the plains of Sylhet and Silchar, as his mood led him. Even as he was making up his mind to leave, came the aggression of August on the sky and every mountain and every forest was shrouded over by sheets of suspended showers. It was reported that at Cherapunji the mountain ranges had effectively obstructed the onslaught of the vaporous hordes, and it was expected that very soon the waterfalls would be dancing down the slopes. This inspired Amit and he decided to localise himself in the Dak Bungalow at Cherapunji and there celebrate his genius in a neo-*Cloud-Messenger*.¹

Thus inspired, Amit donned his thick woollen "Highlander" stockings, strong soled boots, shorts, a khaki "Norfolk" jacket, and a sola hat. He could not be said to remind one of Abanindranath Tagore's painting of the lover in the *Cloud-Messenger*. He looked more like a district engineer, inspecting road repairs.

However, he carried with him a few pocket editions of verse in diverse tongues.

The road leading to Amit's house was narrow and crooked. On the right threatened a precipice overgrown with jungle. As there was ordinarily no traffic on the way, Amit was driving his car rather carelessly, not minding his horn. Just then he was fancying that heat, water, air and the spark which, as Kalidasa had said, synthesised to form the Cloud-Messenger, might very well in these progressive times, re-synthesise themselves into an automobile-messenger; and if the driver carried the love-letter, the ancient could be successfully fulfilled in the modern. Forthwith he resolved to inaugurate, on the first day of the rainy season of the following year, the modern mission of the automobile, by re-tracing the route of its classical prototype,—and who knows, on the way he might come across the destined

1. The famous classic of Kalidasa in which the exiled lover implores the passing clouds to carry the message of his heart to his distant beloved.

one ! Just then, as he reached a curve, Amit suddenly discovered a car coming up the opposite way. There was no room to let it pass. He applied the brake, but before it could work the other car came up against his. There was a collision,—but no catastrophe. The other car, after receding a little, came to a stop on the side of the mountain.

A maiden stepped out of the car and halted. Against the sombre background of imminent death, she flashed forth like a figure etched by lightning,—luminously isolated from the surrounding gloom. She was dressed in a white sari, narrow-bordered, with jacket to match, and wore white sandals on her feet. A tall slim figure, complexion of glistening brown, dark long-drawn eyes full of deep repose sheltered under thick lashes, open forehead from which the hair had been drawn back and tied in a knot, thus freely exposing the rounded loveliness of a face like that of a fruit about to ripen. The sleeves of her jacket reached up to her wrists where they met two plain and solitary bangles. The loose shoulder-end of her sari, unarrested by a brooch, was lifted over her head where it had been fastened by a silver pin of Cuttack workmanship.

Amit, leaving his hat inside the car, stood before her, speechless, like one awaiting chastisement. The maiden seemed touched by this pose of helplessness, and not a little amused. At last Amit managed to mumble, "I am sorry. I am to blame."

She laughed. "Don't blame yourself. It was just an oversight, and that too begun on my side." (When Amit returned home that evening, he spent hours racking his brain for an image that would aptly describe the quality of her voice—a voice that seemed to have a flavour, a touch, of its own. At last he jotted down in that long and narrow note-book of his : "Her voice is soft twirling as are the fumes of quality tobacco, when they issue through the hookah-pipe, redolent with the perfume of rose-water.")

By way of apologising the girl added, "I had driven out to meet a friend of whose arrival I had been informed. Half way

up this lane the chauffeur discovered that we were going the wrong way. As it was impossible to negotiate a turn then, we were proceeding along, when we came up against your car."

At this juncture the chauffeur reported that though the car had not been seriously damaged, it would take some time to set it going.

"If you'll pardon this guilty automobile of mine," said Amit, "I'll be only too happy to reach you to your destination."

"Thanks. There's hardly any need. I am used to walking on these roads."

"The need is mine," insisted Amit. "A proof of your forgiveness."

Seeing the other remain silent, Amit continued, "Please let me retrieve my reputation, unfortunately damaged by this accident, and prove that my worth is at least equal to your driver's."

Without further protest the girl took her seat in the car. On arrival at her place of residence, she got down, and, thanking Amit, added, "If you can spare time could you kindly drop in here tomorrow? I would like to introduce you to the lady of this house."

A curious feeling of embarrassment, unusual to Amit, prevented him from suggesting, "Shall I come now? Time, there's always enough."

(to be continued.)

FROM SERF TO COMRADE

Sucheta Devi

“A WIFE, an ass and a nut-tree only exist to be beaten”—this early European proverb aptly describes the status of women in old Russia. Woman as an individual had no recognition. She was taken to be a minor or a child to be kept under the tutelage of man. As her mental faculties were considered to be non-existent, the only argument to be used with her was that of the rod. It was customary on the marriage night to present the bridegroom with a new whip called *durak* (fool-idiot)—a symbol of authority—which was intended solely for the wife. For every little thing she was to be chastised with the *durak*, because was it not an adage, “Beat your fur and make it warmer, beat your wife and make her wiser”? This chastisement was so much a part of the ordinary routine of her life that it is said, a Russian woman was surprised and felt neglected if she did not get it quite often.

Such ideas prevailed even as late as the sixteenth century. A moral code of that century enunciates : “If a wife refuses to obey and does not attend to what the husband tells her . . . it is advisable to beat her with a whip according to the measure of her guilt. . . keep a whip. . . and choose carefully where you strike. A whip is painful and effective, deterrent and salutary.” The quotation clearly indicates the degraded position women held in society. Other facts also go to show that woman was the chattel and property of her lord the husband. When travelling, a woman did not get a separate passport, but was entered on her husband’s passport, for, according to the law, the husband’s consent was necessary if the wife wanted to travel. In Russia, a land of slavery, woman perhaps was the worst slave. She had no freedom of movement, no control over her children or property.

Her work was given no economic value. It was deemed unnecessary to give her facilities for intellectual development.

Even the later age presents the same picture. A study of the Tsarist marriage code reveals some interesting facts. The rights and duties arising out of marriage enforced that "the spouses should live together." Every act that led to their separation was prohibited. If the husband changed his residence the wife must follow him. The law further enjoined that the wife must obey the husband who was the head of the family and that the wife's prime duty was submission. It reveals that marriage was not looked upon as a partnership between man and woman, but was an ownership of woman by the man. As only religious marriage was recognised in Russia, divorce was not allowed. If any one contracted a civil marriage outside Russia it was considered invalid as soon as the parties stepped on Russian soil. Marriage with Jews, heathens and heretics was forbidden. Even the control of the parents in this matter was so great that the marriage contract depended on the consent of the guardians, otherwise the "guilty parties" were liable to imprisonment. Here indeed was a great contrast between the condition prevailing in Russia and in other European countries. Elsewhere by this age divorce was becoming a common feature and woman was being progressively recognised as an equal partner in the marriage contract.

The 1917 revolution, however, overthrew the old order and transformed radically all the prevailing values. It set about to give justice to the oppressed and to establish a new society based on perfect equality. Accordingly, one of the earliest acts of the Soviet Government, on coming to power, was to alter the marriage and other laws that kept women in a dependent position. Lenin's decess of December the 19th and 20th, 1917, on the "Dissolution of Marriage" and on "Civil Marriage, Children and Registration" replaced the Tsarist marriage code. The new code repudiated the old system based on ideas of inequality and indissolubility, and established the principle of

complete equality between man and woman, of the right to hold separate property, of mutual responsibility to support each other and of civil marriage and the freedom to dissolve marriage. It gave the legitimate and illegitimate children the same rights. At the conference of proletarian and peasant women held in 1919, Lenin, estimating the achievements of the Soviet Government, said : "Of the laws that kept women in a dependent position not one stone remains standing in the Soviet Republic. I mean by that, the laws that exploited the weaker, often indeed the humiliating position of women. . . . In democratic republics we see that equality of rights is indeed proclaimed but at every step—in civil laws and the laws concerning woman's position in the family and divorce—we find inequality and degradation of woman . . . that is a violation of democracy The Soviet has done more than any other country. . . to realise the democratic idea by wiping out the last trace of the disabilities, hitherto imposed upon women, from its legislation."

Lenin's decrees were followed by the code of 1918. By the new legislation civil registration became usual and marriage began to lose its religious and ecclesiastical aspects, specially so in the cities. But the immediate result of the innovation was not happy. Unable to adjust themselves to the new circumstances, the people lost all balance. This and other causes led to the abuse of the new laws. All the old social rules and conventions, whether good or bad, were disregarded. A regime of free love, with all its undesirable consequences, prevailed. Few people understood the true significance of the new laws ; to them it meant the inauguration of a reign of license. To quote Fannina Halle, "Groups among the rising generations tried to find theoretical and intellectual basis for this nihilism. . . to exalt the terribly primitive character of their views on sex to a principle."

No society can exist for long based on such dangerous theories. Sex-life in new Russia became so demoralised and degraded that at last Lenin himself had to intervene and condemn the social condition in unequivocal terms. In criticising those

theories he said, "I consider them to be utterly un-Marxian and moreover unsocial." Again, "As a communist I have not the slightest sympathy with the theory, even when it is beautifully labelled as love made free." He observed that it was true that communism was meant to introduce the joy of life and vital vigour but believed that sexual license, instead of producing the desired result, detracted from it, and was particularly harmful in a revolutionary epoch. He also defined the ways in which the youth should try to find the joy of life. "Young people have special need of the joy of life and vital vigour." "Healthy sports, gymnastics, swimming, tramping, physical exercises of every kind, many-sided intellectual interests, learning, study, researches," were according to him the means of attaining it. "The Revolution calls for concentration and augmentation of our powers on the part of the masses and of the individuals. It cannot tolerate orgiastic conditions. . . . The proletariat is a rising class, it does not need intoxication either as a narcotic or a stimulus."

Other leaders also condemned the prevailing moral chaos. This made the people take stock of the situation and review the social and moral condition of the last few years. Much debate and discussion followed, out of which evolved more normal and healthy views. Men were taught to look upon women as comrades and not as mere objects of pleasure, while it was impressed on women to be conscious of their dignity and self-respect.

However, in 1925, when the All-Russian Central Executive met, it brought forward for discussion a resolution on "Codification of the laws concerning marriage, family and wardship." The Government wanted to estimate the result of the act they had passed seven years back and also to amend it, to meet the new conditions. The code proposed further radical changes of the marriage laws, which gave rise to vehement discussions and differences of opinion. In order to get the opinion of the people of Russia meetings were held all over the country. Men and women from all over Russia took enthusiastic part in the discussions

which went on for more than a year. Finally in January 1927 the new law came into force, which forms the base of the modern marriage conditions in Russia. The aim of the code is to secularise marriage, and to liberate women. It is based on the theory that relation between man and woman is a matter of private concern and the State should interfere as little as possible.

Thus marriage is made perfectly secular. Only civil marriage is recognised by the State. It is looked upon as a civil contract between the parties. The Soviet State does not discriminate between a factual, or a non-registered, and a registered marriage. The only difference is that in case of divorce the fact of the former (factual marriage) has to be established in a court of law, while the latter (registered marriage) has documentary proof. Any sort of temporary union, however, is not given the status of marriage. The union must last a considerable period to get the status. Thus the decisive factor in marriage is not the form by which the union takes place, but its essential nature. Hence the law does not recognise such crimes as bigamy and adultery. Legal bigamy is, however, not possible in Russia, as a man already married is not allowed to register another marriage.

The new Russian marriage is a very simple affair. There is no unseemly expense or splendour. The parties have to intimate the Registry (S.A.G.S.) and appear at the office with or without witnesses as they choose. Witnesses are only necessary in case of marriages of illiterate persons. Even the presence of both the parties is not necessary. One of them must be present while the other may conveniently phone up. The requisite conditions are, that the parties should be above 18 years of age, furnish proof of their identity and declare in writing that each one is informed of the other's state of health. At the Registry the parties are informed of the relevant clauses of the marriage code. None enters upon marriage ignorant of the requirements of the consequences. Clause 8 of the marriage code states that with marriage it is not necessary for the woman to

change her name or nationality. The wife can retain her individual name. By mutual agreement either party can change the name and the nationality. Most women prefer to retain their maiden names. The question of the name and nationality of the children are settled by mutual agreement.

Both the parties have free choice of occupation and the right to live separately if they so desire. The joint conduct of the household is a matter of mutual agreement. As regards property, that acquired before marriage is individual, but that acquired after marriage is joint. In case of separation the shares are allotted by the court. A very important innovation is, that the house-wife's labour is calculated as work of equal value. Man and woman being equal, they share equally the responsibility of supporting the children. Man alone is not required to earn and support.

Divorce is easy and simple. Here, too, the right of the individual, rather than of the State, to settle the matter is fully accepted. Divorce may be asked either by both the parties after mutual agreement or by one party. The State merely interferes to note the decision arrived at and to determine the legal consequences. The supreme court once issued the following instructions to the lower courts : "To concern itself with the conduct of either party in a divorce case, would imply an utterly false interpretation of the principles of Soviet law." There are no lengthy divorce suits usual in other countries ; no reasons need be given for wanting dissolution. All the unwelcome features of divorce cases, the scandal, the publicity, the probing into intimate details of matrimonial disputes, are entirely absent. It is a businesslike termination of a contract. Having come to a mutual agreement the parties apply for a divorce at the S.A.G.S. and present their identity and marriage certificates. In case of unregistered marriage they have to present a "confirmation of marriage" by the court, whereupon the divorce is granted. In case of one party only wanting the divorce, the procedure is naturally a little more complicated. The registration of both marriage and divorce

is free of charge. After the divorce the parties are free to marry at any time. There is no waiting period, as in other countries.

As the Soviet law is adapted to the requirements of economically independent working women who are now a normal feature of the Russian society, the claim of maintenance, in case of divorce, is not always allowed to the woman. Support is allowed to that party which is either unemployed or incapable of work. The duration of such maintenance is not for life but for a year or six months. As regards the care of children, the matter is generally decided by mutual consent and the decision is recorded in the divorce register. In case of dispute between husband and wife on the matter, it is decided by the court, entirely in the interests of the children. Children upto 8 years of age are often left with the mother. Sometimes they are sent to a children's home and both the parents have to contribute to their maintenance.

Divorce came as a boon to the Russian woman. In matrimonial disputes it is usually the woman, who, being the weaker of the two, gets the worse. And so in Russia when women were allowed the privilege to break away from an intolerable union, they fully exercised it. After the revolution when there was a great outburst of divorce cases, a large number of the applications came from women. At present the number of divorce cases have come down considerably but it is significant that 60 per cent of these cases are still initiated by women.

The new marriage code has enabled the women of Russia to find their proper place in society. To-day men and women have equal rights and share the responsibilities equally with regard to property and children. They are equally free to make or break marriages, to live their individual life and to follow their independent careers. One visitor to Russia remarks, "only here do we find large masses of married couples who can be described as companions in the truest sense of the word. . . . There are isolated cases in bourgeois countries of married couples united by similar interests and common endeavour but in Russia—and that is

just where the difference lies—these exceptions are the rule. . . . Such comradeship is of course only possible where the wife not only enjoys equal rights but is economically independent.” What a transformation from being the victim of the *durak* to be a comrade, cultured, independent and self-reliant, sharing equally the joys and burdens of social, political and domestic life ! Woman today is no longer like the nut-tree or the fur to be *beaten* into usefulness ; rather, the bright young Komsomolka snaps her fingers at the erstwhile tyrant and sings :

*Like it or not I do not care,
Your wife is no addlepate,
Lay finger on me, if you dare,
And I'll be a delegate.*

This review of the Russian marriage system is not made to applaud all that is done in Russia. Many of the new changes are too radical and, perhaps, much shuffling and re-shuffling will have to be done before the Russians evolve a steady and stable system that will stand the test of time. Propositions, sound in theory, often prove utterly unworkable. The Soviet laws may have gone too far in their attempt to give perfect justice to women, and I am sure many of their ultra-radical laws will be considerably altered and modified in due course of time. Nevertheless, one cannot help admiring their attempt to give absolute equality to make up for the age-long oppression that woman has suffered. Here for the first time in history a State has taken up the question in its entirety and is attempting to solve the problem in a comprehensive manner. Unsystematic and isolated efforts have been made from time to time to improve women's condition all over the world, but the Soviet Government is not satisfied by superficial reforms and improvements. They have challenged the very foundation of the social system and attempted to rebuild it in accordance with principles of justice and equality.

A PHILOSOPHY THE AGE REQUIRES

Prof. P. B. Adhikari

“PHILOSOPHY bakes no bread.” It is not known who first made this remark in disparagement of any practical value of the study. Whoever he might be, the spirit underlying the remark does not seem to have died out. Rather it has almost passed into a by-word. It is still the current attitude of a vast majority of men, not in the West alone, but all over the “civilised” world, if not in theory, at least in practice. The curious fact is that those who would thus denounce the value of this branch of learning have an “unconscious” philosophy of their own, though they would not admit it. But their philosophy is of a low order, which would not go beyond the economic view of the things they value in life. They either forget or have no idea that mere economics have but an *instrumental* value ; they have no *intrinsic* worth in themselves. It is not that these critics have no interest in things spiritual. No human life can be lived without them. But they have no proper evaluation of values between the material and the spiritual. And when conflicts arise between them in practical life, the former interests are found to get preference generally. This is a reversion of the true relation between them—rather a perversion of the real interests of life.

The present Age appears to be characterised by this perversion on a wide scale, resulting in conflicts and discords, not in individual life alone, but in social and political as well. The world of humanity is fast approaching a catastrophe. We wonder if there is any remedy at all for this sad state of things—any salutary measures to avoid this tragic trend of events, otherwise appearing to be inevitable. Is the civilisation of the age, marked in so many ways by scientific discoveries and inventions, by high intellectual achievements in diverse fields, doomed to failure and ultimate helplessness ? If so, where to draw the line between

the so-called *barbarism* of old and the vaunted civilisation of the present ! One often wonders with a sigh if the older age of "darkness" were not happy and peaceful in comparison with the distracting condition of the present. There does not appear to be any want of recognition of the sad state of things, nor, indeed, of a wish for its amelioration. But the *will* to act is positively wanting. No age was ever characterised by so much helplessness and absence of initiative. If Hell is paved with good intentions, no better illustration of its truth could be found than in the present helpless and chaotic condition of humanity.

To set matters right leaders of thought and action have to exercise an impartial insight into the situation and to spot the real causes of its troubles and disorders. And that requires a discipline of the self on new lines, a discipline not of the intellect alone, but also of the heart. They have to be above the current influences on both thought and feeling, so as to have a calm understanding and adequate comprehension of the real nature of the state of things, going down to the root of them. And that is to achieve what is called wisdom in its older and nobler sense, for which we find a better term in Indian Thought, namely, *Prajñā* (प्रज्ञा). In other words, they should have to take a truly philosophic attitude towards the situation, not of course of the indifferent sort, but charged with a real, deep interest to advise and guide men with warning words of wisdom. It was with some insight that the term *philosophy* was coined in the Greek language to designate the characteristic virtue of a truly *wise* man. And it was also a brilliant idea of Plato's to have a philosopher at the head of his ideal State, for a philosopher alone was deemed by him to be the fittest person to guide and administer affairs of a State on right lines. And why ? Because it is he who is capable of knowing the highest values of life and the true order of their evaluation, and so he is supposed to be the fit person to teach humanity of their true Good. And consider the sort of all-round discipline that is demanded by Plato of one who would aspire to this philosophic wisdom. The modern Europe is

indebted to ancient Greece, directly or indirectly, for many aspects of its culture. But in the field of statesmanship, it does not appear to have truly realised the high truth of the Platonic idea. Rather, politically, the age is a blind follower of the Italian incarnation of the Indian Kautilya—the inveterate Machiavelli.

In the polity of ancient India we find that the King had always at his court a Brahmin adviser, noted particularly for his sound wisdom and saintly character. The ruler could not, ordinarily, launch on any projects of his own liking without consulting first his wise spiritual counsellor. There are recorded historical facts showing how in the event of a king going against the advice of his *Dharmā-dheesha*, he was chastised freely and without fear, and yet the ruler had no power to remove him from his sacred office, far from dealing out any punishment on his fearless righteous adviser. As regards the influence of men of wisdom on the politicians of today, we need only cite treatment meted out to the large-hearted philosopher, Bertrand Russell of England, and to that noble writer of France, Romain Rolland, for their outspoken words of advice given at the time of the last Great War. They had both to suffer punishment for what was considered by the political leaders of the time as “dangerous” impertinence on their part. One had to be imprisoned in his own country and the other virtually banished from his native land. The verdict of history has changed now, the people of the very countries realising the sound truth of their warnings. But it is too late now to check the course of events, the sequel of the last war, which ended (rather was suspended) with a nominal “Peace” concluded unjustly in the interests of the dominating parties. The *nemesis* comes now for what they did wantonly against the defeated countries. The victors are in terror of being victimised themselves. It seems there is an inscrutable justice shaping the course of worldly events, which unfortunately is little understood or heeded by men in power.

It is this justice, in its wider and nobler sense, which is the supreme necessity of the day. It is the root virtue of all others,

the exercise of which is demanded indispensably, not in international affairs only, but in all active relations of humanity for their peace and preservation. Here too the insight of Plato should come to the rescue of the present situation in the social and political life of man. Did he not put justice at the top of his list of cardinal virtues as the supreme necessity for the exercise of all other virtues ? Was he not right in giving the highest intrinsic value to this primordial virtue required for the harmonious discharge of the functions of life, individual and social, national and international, as also humanitarian ? And who is capable of exercising this virtue but the man of wisdom (*vijnapurusa*) who has acquired this noble quality of character by systematic discipline and due control of the passions which are mainly responsible for the ills of life. The present age needs absolutely the guidance of such wise men, if it is to avoid the catastrophic consequences towards which it is tending. The remedy, if any, lies there.

But no guidance from without would be of any avail, unless the very attitude towards life and its true values undergoes a radical transformation. And *intellectually* that means a new philosophy of life, or rather a new orientation of the philosophic view of life. But here lies the rub. There is a wide-spread distrust, among people of the age, in the efficacy of any other philosophy but their own. Looking to the intellectual history of man, we find that it is philosophy that has come forward, over and over again at critical moments of human life, to avert, as far as possible, actual or impending crises, by holding up the highest values of life before the people of the ages concerned. True philosophy arose, whether in the East or in the West, with the problem of these ideal values. It was the start and finish of Indian Thought from the earliest days. The problem gave also an impetus to real philosophic thought in ancient Greece, started by Socrates and carried out by his worthy disciples—notably by Plato and Aristotle. All that was pre-Socratic was rather cosmologic or ontologic, than truly philosophic. And whenever the

older order changed demanding a solution of a distracting situation of the new, there arose a fresh consideration of the values pursued and a renewed evaluation of them in the light of the real nature of the situation and the needs of its proper amelioration. Whenever philosophy failed to satisfy this inevitable demand, its practical utility as a study and guide has been invariably discredited and a widespread scepticism has been the consequence.

The present age is one of the kind. Here Philosophy, with its expansive branches, shows no doubt great development in its scope and methods. But this development, diverting attention from its real purpose, is also partly responsible for the general apathy towards the value of the subject for life. Much of what goes now by the exalted name are rather its side-issues than the real object of the noble pursuit. Cosmology, its oldest branch, has almost dropped out, its place being now taken up by modern Physics. Epistemology or theory of knowledge has become the predominant part of much of the philosophy of the day in the West. But the place and value of this supposed basic branch is found to be questioned nowadays in some influential quarters, at least on the lines in which it has been treated from the days of John Locke and Immanuel Kant. Its death-blow as an indispensable and important branch of philosophic studies is imminent from the side of the Pragmatic movements of the present day thought. No wonder, seeing that much of what is regarded as Epistemology is either directly or indirectly influenced by Ontological presuppositions or is found, on critical examination, to involve, inadvertently in its method of approach, the very thing it would establish. This ontological part of philosophy, as theory of Reality, is rather hanging in the air, between the Physical philosophers (among whom may be counted the Realists of the day) on the one hand, and the Idealistic thinkers on the other, without anything like a final approach to the problem they have undertaken to solve. The Philosophy of Spirit is what may be said to stand over still as a promising field of study. As a branch of philosophy it has suffered hitherto more on account of its

real treatment than from its opponents who would discard the subject as a fit study at all. As a consequence, a good deal of shadowy speculations have gathered round its treatment, so that it becomes difficult to follow the advocates of spirit or to have any clear and definite conception of what they mean by its true nature. On the contrary, there is covertly a relic of the old Animism still in many of the positions advocating the reality of the spirit. The reason for this failure of the study appears to lie in the mode of its approach, which may be regarded as a fictitious method started first by English Empiricists but unconsciously followed by their later opponents. It is assumed uncritically that the spirit can be apprehended just as an external physical object is perceived. It was the genius of Immanuel Kant, which found out the futility of this vicious method, and indicated, in his own way, the right line of procedure to be adopted to determine the existence and nature of the spirit. But, unfortunately for the Western Thought, this new method was not worked out thoroughly by him, nor the valuable suggestion carried out to its satisfactory finish. The mistake of modern empiricism regarding the subject is found to have been committed, centuries earlier, by the Nyaya-Vaisesika School of Indian Thought and others of their following. They too could not give up the animistic idea of *atman* (self, spirit). It was indeed a move on correct lines taken up against this method of approaching the subject by Buddhism on the one hand and Samkhya-Yoga on the other, the monistic Vedanta but carrying on the position of the latter to its logical implications.

It was not my purpose to go into these matters of historical interest, whether of the Western or Eastern philosophy. My purpose here is to emphasise the need of a new mode of approach indispensable to solve the problem of the spirit, to determine its nature and function in a general way, and to show its real place in human life. This approach, to my mind, has to be made again, in the spirit of the old, from the standpoint of values sought by man and their order of valuation that has been

adopted hitherto from time to time. What man is in his truest nature as a spirit can be ascertained only by the implications of what values he has hitherto pursued as the highest and noblest—pursuits which have been a characteristic feature of human life, however modified, obscured or submerged they might have been from time to time in the history of humanity. It is here, in this abiding nature of the highest values, that there lies a hope of a future philosophy that might be expected to offer a panacea to the troubles of the day and an effective remedy of its evils.

It was with a deep insight that the earliest philosophic thought in India, as we find in the best of the Upanisads, turned its attention to the problem of the *self* (*atman*), realising that the knowledge of its true nature is indispensable, not simply for the right way of living a free life, individual or social, but also for the attainment of its ultimate destiny. Hence the fundamental note, running through all philosophic studies and the highest religious pursuits based on them, is—"Know thyself" (*atmanam viddhi*). The spirit, so earnestly sought under the Upanisadic teachings, was not however conceived in the beginning in its true nature as *dynamic*. The static idea, derived from the older animistic positions, was still present in the thoughts as an under-current. It was left to Buddhism to bring out the dynamic nature of the self as *spirit*, ever changing in its achievements of new phases and having potentialities of a far-reaching character, undergoing development on higher and higher planes, if the obstacles to the process are curbed in the course by wisdom and effort.

The Age, it seems, has forgotten that it has a spirit, universal in its essential nature, and dynamic in its ever-growing tendencies upwards. It forgets also its character as evinced historically in its ever recurrent pursuit of higher and wider values. It does not look into the real causes which have come to obstruct its progressive life on right lines. It refuses to learn from the defeats of its relaxation of, or departure from, its true

course. It has ceased to have that wider outlook on life, which a new philosophy of spirit can only offer. If any age needs the guidance of this philosophy, it is the present one. This philosophy, again, to be truly effective in its purpose, must have to be above all narrowing influences of the age, all prejudices, individual and social, national and even international. Its attitude should be purely humanistic. The language in which it should express itself should also be truly universal. Fortunately for the age, the geographical barriers of old are almost gone. The world has grown compact, as it were, bringing its humanity nearer to each other, so that a unitary view of it is not an impossibility now. But this gain in proximity is again fraught with dangers as well, unless there comes a revival of the spirit of man in a necessary expansive form to avert the possible evils by bringing in a new organisation of humanity on the lines of the highest values belonging to man as man, in which alone can the new spirit abide. But will the Age awaken to the Call? Let us wait and see. No better expression could be given by implication, I think, to the spirit in which the true life of the self could be lived for the realisation of its highest and noblest destiny than in the following lines from the Manu Smriti.

सर्वभूतस्यमात्मानं सर्वभूतानिचात्मनि ।

सम्पश्यन्नात्मयाजी वै स्वाराज्यमधिगच्छति ॥

(Chapter XII, Sloka 91).

One who would live the life of the spirit (on right lines) for the attainment of its ultimate destiny (of freedom and independence) has to look upon his own self and that of others with an eye of equality (i.e. impartiality).

SACHAL

A Son of the Desert

Gurdial Mallik

WHEN they asked Sachal when he was born and of what parents, he burst forth into the song :

I was born of none, I was nourished by none. I left Heaven because I could not be contained in it, and came down to the dusty earth of my own accord. I have neither father nor mother, I am everywhere, and it is by mistake that men have called me Sachal.

The biographical details about Sachal's life are fragmentary. He saw the light of day in or about 1750 A. D., in the house of one Mian Sahib Dino, who lived at Daraz, in the Khairpur State in Sindh, and was christened, Abdualwahad. Even in his childhood he is said to have been fond of silence and song. And whenever he fell ill he cured himself by listening to a sweet song or by seeing a beautiful face.

It is said that one day seeing Sachal playing in the street, Shah Latif¹ inquired of some one nearby whose child he was. When the requisite information was furnished to him, he placed his right hand on the head of the child and looking into his eyes, said, "The vessel I have put on the fire, its lid will be removed by him." The prophecy has been fulfilled to the very letter, because it is Sachal who has played the part of the purveyor of the wine (of the wisdom of love) which Shah Latif had distilled from the depths of the Persian wine-press.

Though Sachal was a lover of the beautiful and of music, he had in him a rich vein of asceticism too. This may be attributed to the influence of his teachers who brought up the boy when the latter's father died, and also to his study of books on

1. The greatest poet of Sindh. For an article on Shah Latif by the same author, see Vol. III, Part I (May—July, 1987) of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.—Ed.

philosophy both in Persian and Arabic and to his fellowship with *fakirs*. He seemed to have practised the set discipline of the ethical or orthodox Sufis, because for some time he appears to have been under the spell of self-oblivious ecstasy. Says he, "Friends, now and again I have been in ecstasy."

But in due course he outgrew the attraction of such exhibitions of psychic skill. One day, when he had attained to maturity, some one pointed to the miracles, which were being performed by a *fakir* in the street, and Sachal said, "These are but the blandishments of a street-girl."

Who guided his first steps on the path of spiritual progress ? Some say it was his uncle. "Abdulhaq is the teacher." According to others, it was Guru Gobindsingh, for at one place Sachal says :

From where has the crest-wearing *yogi* come ? Whither does he go ?
He is all love.

But this is generally discounted. The fact is that having associated with aspirants of all faiths, he had cultivated an eclecticism, which enabled him to honour and adore the different teachers of humanity. Just as at another place he sings (speaking of Shri Krishna) :

O wonderful *yogi* what sweetness was there
in the strains of thy flute !

This is why he was an enemy of the priests, on whom he hurled his fire and brimstone :

This puritanical and professional spirituality is untrue. They know nothing of love.

One day the priests invited him to witness the conversion of a Hindu to Islam. Sachal sat all the time in silence, and when the *finale* of the formal ceremony was reached and the new convert was about to be asked to repeat the *Kalama* (the text from the Koran) Sachal rose, red-hot with anger, and walked out in protest against the tyranny of the priests, who, he said,

were but the custodians of the crumbs cast away from the Master's Table of Truth.

It was, however, some time later on that he realised the Reality, which is at the centre of the Universe and a glimpse of which enabled him to have thereafter a free access to every aspect of manifestation and to see in it but a mirror of the Supreme Spirit of Beauty and Love. Describing the state of his being on the occasion, he exclaimed afterwards :

It was like the coming of the sea into the pitcher.

In the thousands of colours I saw the beloved without colour.

All is the beauty of the Beloved.

The eyes have seen the Wonder. Everything is an image of the Beloved.

Sachal felt that God is the eternal man :

Adam is his eternal name, why call him Allah ?

He had crossed the ocean of forms and seen the Formless One standing on this as well as on the other bank. He realised that he had come into his own ; he was a king not a slave ; nay, the king of kings himself :

You are not a slave but the king.

You know everything, how did you become ignorant ? You are yourself the Godhead, why repeat His name ? Says Sachal, God is One, without a second, and in this doubt not.

He came to this realisation *via* the threefold discipline of "I am", "I am not" and "I am",—a discipline in the second stage of which he had to follow the path of heresy. When his own teacher said to him, "Thy first duty is to give up 'faith', follow not the road of another, however virtuous he may be ; rend the veil over thee ; Searcher, expose thy being !" he took the cue from him and stood up against all formalism and sang outside the mosque on the open road, "Why should I run to Kaaba, when my master in the tavern dwells ?"

When he attained to the Truth of Life, he said :

When the reality is manifest the claimant disappears.

He illustrates this by an example :

A man wears a coat, does he name himself a coat ? No, he calls himself by the name he bears. The play of the artist is wonderful. I learnt from the master : "The sound and the echo are one." O, Sachal, sunshine is never apart from the sun.

In a beautiful song he sings :

The dearly-beloved is in the heart. The nightingale is in the garden of the body. The ocean of love is within. Look for the Beloved deep down in your own self. The flowers are in the garden, the moon, too, is in that garden. Says Sachal, the Beloved has been known at last. I saw Him in my own heart.

In his songs Sachal sometimes employed the medium of Urdu-Punjabi, at other times Siraiki (Baluchi akin to Punjabi) and, again, more frequently Sindhi to express himself. But the mystic also wrote in Persian and his philosophical treatise, *Diwan Ashkara*, the original of which is in the State Treasury of Khairpur Mirs, is spoken of very highly. He was thus a poet-cum-philosopher. Here are a few more specimens with a philosophical bias, translated into English by Mr. Jethmal Parsram Gulraj :

What am I ?

What am I ? Oh what am I ? At times I think myself a marionette.
Again at times the thread that moves the kite.
Am I the fountain filled by the clouds ?
Or am I the reflection of the sun in the pool ?

The Two Houses.

What was I there ?
What am I here ?
Alas ! the waves hid the sea, and raging storms did blow.
Thus I earned shocks of pain.
Ah I see ! I left one house to come to another.
But the wave in the sea rebecomes the sea."

The Candle and the Sun.

None lighted the candle to see the sun,
All light is of the sun.

They understood this and saw the sun.
 Many and the One are the same, as drops are of the rain.
 The Master thus spake through him called Sachal.

He was with me.

He for whom I sought the readers of the stars,
 Beloved, He was with me.
 He for whom I sought the oracles,
 He was with me.
 He is not a guest, but the Beloved, and is always with me.
 None is so near as He.
 He for whom I passed sleepless nights,
 He was with me.
 I looked for Him here, I looked for Him there,
 But looked not for Him in my own being.
 He for whom I shed tears of separation,
 He was with me.
 O Sachal, seek not far, know thyself,
 He for whom I was gathering presents,
 He was with me.

Towards the end of his life, on which the curtain fell in 1829, Sachal seemed to believe that when the hour for going to the tryst strikes the Beloved will of his own accord come to the lover, and that there was no need for a strenuous, self-conscious forcing of one's steps on the path leading to the tryst,—the tryst of Truth. The burden of the final stage of his self-realisation is contained in the following song, which is to be heard on almost everyone's lips in Sindh :

We have seen the *Kaaba* in the heart, what need is there to go to Mecca ?

My mind is the mosque, why then worship in a separate shrine ?
 In every artery is He, why then read the *Kalma* ?

My Beloved will come to me of his own accord ; why go to him ?
 Sachal is smitten already with love, why then should he strike himself with a knife ?

JOHN DONNE

A Study of his Influence on the Post-War English Poetry

Prof. Itrat Husain Zuberi, M. A., Ph. D.

THE influence of John Donne (1572-1631) on the post-war English poetry is not so curious a phenomenon as it first appears to be, for the post-war poets discovered a close affinity with the school of Donne, and realised the significance of the tradition which has descended from Donne to the other Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century.

It may at first seem surprising that a poet who was not long ago considered to be mediaeval, should exercise so great a fascination on the minds of the sceptical and disillusioned modern poets that during the last ten years he has become perhaps the most widely read poet in England after Shakespeare.

The legend of Donne's mediaevalism arose because of his immense learning which embraced the whole field of scholastic philosophy and mediaeval theology, the New Learning, the Hermetic physics, the new Science of Copernicus, Galileo and Bacon, and because in the words of Donne, "the immoderate desire for human learning and languages," took him to the untrodden and unfamiliar bye-paths of mediaeval learning.

It is well to remember here that Donne's great grandmother was a sister of Sir Thomas More, who translated the great mediaeval scholar Pico Mirandola: curiously enough the first biographer of Donne in the seventeenth century, Isak Walton, has compared Donne's scholarship to that of Mirandola. He says that it was remarked of Donne "that this age had brought forth another Picus Mirandola," of whom story says "that he was rather born, than made, wise by study."

Though Donne was one of the greatest scholars of his age, the extent of his learning has no doubt been exaggerated by his

recent critics, like Miss Ramsay and others. There is no reason to suppose that his learning was greater or more mediaeval than that of his other great contemporaries like Hooker or Bishop Andrewes. In fact, what surprised his contemporaries was not the mediaeval cast of his mind but the freshness and originality of his wit and poetic invention.

Critics like Walton and Edward Phillips admired the "sharpness of his wit"¹ and "the gaiety of his fancy". The whole temper of Donne's mind as revealed in his poetry is far from being mediaeval; it is essentially that of the Renaissance. Sir Herbert Grierson has pointed out that he had "a temperament which was rather that of the Renaissance than that either of Puritan England or of the Counter-Reformation, the temperament of Raleigh and Bacon rather than of Milton or Herbert or Crashaw."

But it is significant that Donne never became the Renaissance debauchee like Robert Green or a confirmed sceptic and athiest like Marlowe, though in his youth he was a typical young man of the Renaissance, eager for pleasure and worldly advancement. A contemporary of Donne, Sir Richard Baker, calls him "not dissolute but very neat; a great visitor of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verse," one who in his poetry delightfully scoffed at women, and ridiculed fidelity in love, for he held that

Change is the nursery
of musicke, joy, life and eternity.
("Change")

It is the earlier Donne of "Songs and Sonets", "Elegies and Satyres", rather than the saintly Donne of "Devotions and Sermons", that has influenced T. S. Eliot and through him the other younger poets. There is nothing mediaeval in the love poetry and satires of Donne; they are the very antithesis of

1. Walton's *Lives*. Edited by T. Zouch. p. 120.

E. Phillips, *Theatrum Poetrum Anglicanorum*. (1675). Vol II. P. 2-3.

mediaeval chivalry and the idealisation of womanhood ; in them we discover the exultant dawn of the Renaissance spirit in English poetry. Indeed, the nature of Donne's thought even in his devotions and sermons cannot be called mediaeval.

The aim of mediaeval philosophers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, was to achieve a vast and unique synthesis and unification of all knowledge, a *Summa* was the end to be attained. Donne does not attempt to unify his vast knowledge or to reduce it to an organic system of thought ; his method in poetry as well as in theology and Philosophy was mainly analytical. He was the curious explorer of the human soul, interested in the psychology of experience, whether of sensuous love or mystical illumination. We find in him the disintegration of mediaeval thought and scholastic method ; even in his lyric poetry there is no background of an ideal unity in poetic or religious experience as we find in the poetry of Dante or Lucretius.

It is this disintegration of mediaeval thought and chivalric tradition in his poetry that perhaps fascinated post-war poets like T. S. Eliot, through whom the tradition of Donne has influenced the other poets like Herbert Read, W. H. Auden, and Cecil Day Lewis. T. S. Eliot and others discovered in Donne their own awareness of the decay and dissolution of the Victorian compromise and perhaps also of the Democratic and Liberal era which was born with the French Revolution.

It is this strange similarity between the post-Elizabethan and the post-war periods that accounts for the influence of Donne, for in his poetry and prose were reflected the scepticism and the intellectual curiosity of the Renaissance and the ardour and passionate quest for the religious and mystical experience that characterised the Reformation. Donne in this sense held up the mirror to his age as no other Elizabethan poet except Shakespeare had done. He had revolted against the Spenserian and Petrarchan tradition in Elizabethan poetry ; there is no courtly grace of love in his poetry. He declared bravely :

Such in loves warfare is my case,

I may not article for grace,
 Having put love at last to shew this face.
 ("Loves Exchange")

In a similar manner T. S. Eliot in our age has rebelled against the Romantic and Miltonic tradition in the English poetry of the 19th century. Donne's influence in the seventeenth, as in the twentieth, century has been primarily a technical influence in the sense that it enlarged the domain of feeling and perception for the poets who followed him. Carew, who was his contemporary realised the true significance of Donne's revolt against the Petrarchan tradition, and of the new quality of his language which was pruned of all the mythological luxuriance of the Elizabethan lyric verse. Carew said :

The Muses garden with Pedantique Weedes
 O'rspredd, was purg'd by thee ; the lazie seeds
 Of servile imitation throwne away :
 And fresh invention planted. . .¹

He praised Donne for having enlarged the province of poetry. He pointed out that he had

open'd us a Mine
 Of rich and pregnant phansie, drawne a line
 Of masculine expression.

The "Mine" was in fact the realm of psychological experience that Donne has made available to poetry, and the new poetic imagery he grew, as Dr. Johnson said, from "the store-house of mediaeval learning."

It is in this two-fold technical sense that Donne has influenced T. S. Eliot and through him the younger poets. T. S. Eliot has given to the problem of poetic technique an important place in his criticism, holding "that the poet has no personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium

1. Carew's "Elegie upon the death of Dean of Pauls, Dr. John Donne."

See "Elegies upon the Author"—*Donne's Poetical Works*, edited by H. J. C. Grierson, 1912. All the quotations are from this standard edition.

and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways, and in the communication of these experiences the technique of the poet is of prime importance.¹

Donne fashioned a poetic idiom in which intellect, emotion and thought were fused into a significant poetic pattern. He also incorporated erudition in his poetic sensibility, and though he banished mythology from his poetry, scholastic philosophy and the New Learning took its place. T. S. Eliot has given a similar place in his poetry to Anthropology and the philosophical concepts derived from Hebrew and mystical literature.

Donne gave a new energy and intellectual suppleness to his poetic language which is both learned and simple. T. S. Eliot has pointed out that while Donne is an intellectual poet, Tennyson and Browning are merely *reflective* poets. He has said that "A thought to Donne was an experience ; it modified his sensibility." He makes us think. Donne, quite contrary to the mediaeval view² of physical love, has proclaimed the sanctity of the body.

As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, as like soules as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtile knot that makes us man :
So must pure lovers soules descend
T' affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend
Else a great Prince in prison lies.

("The Extasie")

It is thus not true to assert, as Mr. Lewis has done, that Donne draws "distinctions between spirit and flesh to the detriment of the latter."³

1. *Selected Essays* (p. 19-20).

2. Mr. F. C. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love* (p. 14) has said that for the mediaeval church "Love itself was wicked and did not cease to be wicked if the object of it were your own wife."

3. "Donne and love poetry in the seventeenth century", by C. S. Lewis. In *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson*, (Oxford, 1988).

He refined the poetic idiom so that it could aptly express the fine shades of his subtle thought. Donne is in this sense as great a reformer of the English language as Dryden. "He first made it possible to think in lyric verse, and at the same time retained a quality of song and the suggestion of instrumental accompaniment of the earlier lyric. No poet has excelled him in this peculiar combination of qualities."¹ He created a poetic idiom through which he was able to express the consciousness of his age ; in a similar manner T. S. Eliot, Auden, and others have fashioned an idiom which, while retaining the intellectual vigour of Donne's conceits, has acquired the conversational ease of modern speech. Donne and T. S. Eliot both have a command over the intricacies of poetic felicity such as these in an occasional poem :

First her eyes kindle other Ladies eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels lusters rise,
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good desire.²

And T. S. Eliot can switch us from the terrible emptiness of "The Wasteland" to the purity of a love song.

You gave me hyacinths first a year ago
They called me the hyacinth girl,
Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden
Your arms full and your hair wet, I could not
Speak and my eyes failed, and I was neither
Living nor dead and I knew nothing
Looking into heart of light, the Silence.

Though T. S. Eliot told me some two years ago that Donne has only influenced the technique of his earlier verse, there is no doubt that the terrifying honesty of Donne as revealed in his devotional poems and sermons has also helped him to express with rare psychological insight the agony of the purgative stage

1. *A Garland for John Donne*. Edited by T. Spenser. Camb. 1981.

2. "Eccologue, December 26, 1618, at the Marriage of the Earle of Sommerset."

of his own religious life. His soul, however, is less tormented than that of Donne and he seems to be on his way as revealed in "Ash-Wednesday" and the "Ariel poems" to achieve a humility and sense of reconciliation more akin to the peaceful assurance of Herbert than to the "holy discontent" of Donne.

T. S. Eliot after the purgatory of the "The Wasteland" and the spiritual emptiness of "The Hollow Men", has given us a glimpse of the mystical peace for which he yearns. He has said :

Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision,
Grant me thy peace.¹

In "Ash-Wednesday", the "Journey of the Magi", and "A Song for Simeon" and in part of "The Murder in the Cathedral", T. S. Eliot has given us the finest and most genuine devotional verse of our time and this he was able to accomplish by incorporating the method, technique and idiom of Donne in his own poetic sensibility.

The other two elements of Donne's technique and thought which have influenced the English poets like Herbert Read and Auden, and the American poets like John Ransom and Elinor Wylie, and his peculiar scepticism and his attitude towards Sex are his ironic insight into the psychology of love where he has emphasised the interdependence of the soul and body. Man is body and soul and these two cannot be separated in the experience of love.

Love's not so pure and abstract as they use
To say, which have no Mistress but their Muse,
But as all else being elemented too,
Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.
("Loves growth")

He held that body and soul are interdependent, for,

1. "A Song for Simeon."

Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
 But yet the body is his booke.
 ("The Extasie")

The cause of *tension* in the poetry of Donne was the sceptical and naturalistic element in his thought which led him to repudiate the chivalric and worshipful attitude towards women as we find in Sidney, Spenser and the other Elizabethan sonneteers. The scepticism of Donne was the starting point of his search for Truth and shows the integrity of his mind. As early as 1594 he declared (in his III Satyre) :

doubt wisely ; in strange way
 To stand inquiring right, is not to stray ;¹

Though Donne outlived the sceptical and rationalistic element in his thought and achieved through mystical faith "a modest assurance" of his Salvation, his followers in the secular line, such as Henry King, Townshend and Andrew Marvell, all have imitated the mixture of his peculiar philosophy of love and scepticism, and his characteristic conceits ; and they too have mingled levity with seriousness as in Marvell's great poem "To His Coy Mistress," where in a poem written in a light-hearted manner, he gives us these magnificent lines :

But at my back I always hear
 Times winged charriot hurrying near ;
 And yonder all before us lie
 Deserts of vast Eternity.
 The Grave is a fine and private place,
 But none I think do there embrace.

The conceit of the last two lines is in the true tradition of Donne and is a fine example of the imaginative surprise in a

1. The quotation would gain in significance for the Indian reader, if the previous line in the original text were also quoted. It should then read

*To adore, or scorne an image, or protect
 May all be bad ; doubt wisely ; in strange way
 To stand inquiring right, is not to stray ; (Editor)*

metaphysical poem. Donne has employed a similar conceit in a frivolous poem called "The Will".

Therefore I'll give no more ; But I'll undoe
The world by dying ; because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in Mines, where none doth draw it forth ;
And all your graces no more use shall have
Then a Sun dyall in a grave.

Though no poet in our time has been able to achieve the grandeur of the sepulchral quality of Donne's conceits, such as "A bracelet of bright haire, about the bone," Herbert Read has successfully employed the austerity of Donne's conceits as in the description of lovers :

Their lips
Are held in the tension of lust, and lines
Of unlightened care have cut
Across the mask upon the bone.

Herbert Read does not try to escape from reality into a dream-world which solaced the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century. In his poem "Mutations of the Phoenix" we find the intensity of poetic conception and the bony and stark quality of Donne's imagery. He says :

The flame
burns all
uses
the ducts and chambers of our tunnelled
flesh,
to focus flame
to its innate intensity.

In Ransoms' "Spectral Lovers" and Elinor Wylie's "Angels and Earthly Creatures," we distinctly notice the influence of Donne's technique and his conceits. The following lines of Elinor Wylie are in the true tradition of Donne :

The ashes of this error shall exhale
Essential variety, and two by two

Lovers devout and loyal shall renew
The legend, and refuse to let it fail.

Donne has taught these poets to fuse intellect with emotion and achieve that integrity of thought which is essential to all great poetry. He has enabled them to avoid the romantic fallacy of Shelley, as described by T. S. Eliot, that "when Shelley has some definite statement to make, he simply says it; keeps his image on one side and his meaning on the other."

No English poet of the past has exercised a greater influence on the post-war poets than Donne, for they too have realised the interdependence of the soul and body in a passionate experience; their prosody too has the ease and vigour of conversational speech; and their aim is not only to concentrate on the psychology of their own experience, but also to raise it to a metaphysical significance which transcends and universalises that experience. Thus the influence of Donne has enabled the poets of to-day to *discover* themselves, and through this discovery to interpret the peculiar consciousness of our age and to create a poetic idiom through which they have expressed the cynicism, the disillusioned and tormented mind of this age as well as its efforts to realise the richness of the religious and mystical life of the individual soul.

It is high time that the young poets in India also freed themselves from the mythological luxuriance of Romantic thought and their escapist tendencies, and to achieve the integrity of the poetic self and vision by studying more closely the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. We have laboured too long under the spell and influence of the 19th century Romantic poets from Wordsworth to Rossetti, a period for which our Universities in India have shown an unnecessary overfondness.

Donne deserves to be better known in India to-day, for he is, as Ben Johnson called him, "the first poet in the world for some things." The scepticism of his early thought, the cynicism of his wit, the freshness and originality of his poetic

invention and above all the terrifying honesty of his soul whose progress we can watch from "the evaporations of wit" as Donne called his "Paradoxes and Problems" to the agony of Purgation in the Holy Sonnets and lastly to the mystical faith of his magnificent Sermons ; all these various phases of his thoughts have points of contact with the manifold facets of our own age. The poets of to-day can also say with Donne that "Contraries meet in me."

It is through Donne, as T. S. Eliot has confessed, that the modern poets have "elicited their own talents," and found that "fulness of satisfaction"¹ which they could not discover in any other English poet of the past.

1. *A Garland for John Donne.*

REVIEWS

THE TRUE INDIA : by C. F. Andrews (George Allen &
Unwin. Price, 6 s. net).

TESTAMENT OF INDIA : by Ela Sen (George Allen &
Unwin. Price, 7 s. 6 d. net).

BOOKS on India are rarely written for Indian readers. They are usually addressed to the British and American public for whose judgment we are made to care. If they can be persuaded to acknowledge us as civilised, we must be so ; if they cannot, how dare we recognise ourselves as such ! And so the above two books are also intended to enlighten foreign opinion,—whose usual sources of information are retired *pucca sahibs*, cold weather tourists, paid journalists, and above all that supreme specimen of white—though the whites prefer to call it yellow—journalism, the notorious Miss Mayo. And since they are written to enlighten, and not merely to amuse or excite, the reader, they are not likely to find many readers,—the number of intelligent men and women of sober judgments in any country, east or west, being strictly limited. Nevertheless, the British Publishers are to be congratulated for making available to their public the opinions of writers who may at least be expected to know what they are talking about.

Mr. Andrews, though not a native of this land, can hardly be called a foreigner. He is one of those great servants of mankind and true citizens of the world who make whatever country they live in their own,—not by appropriating it but by giving themselves to it. Yet he is no mere propagandist of this country, for though devoted to its interests, like all true Christians, he values truth more than loyalty. Above all he knows his limitations and has wisely restricted the scope of his observations to the social aspects of India's current struggle. His thesis is more or less an answer to the charge of social and moral degeneracy made by Miss Mayo against this country. It is not a retort, for Mr. Andrews is too sober to quarrel and fling back the challenge, that though the body of the Indian social organism is diseased and disabled, the parasites are not all indigenous, and that no disease is so dangerous to humanity as the rabid infection of hatred, violence and lust for conquest let loose in some of the scientifically civilised countries of the West. The author studiously avoids all such means of humiliating the opponent and makes a sober plea for a better understanding of this country's difficulties. He admits all the weaknesses

and vices from which India truly suffers, but points out how the Indians themselves are aware of them and making heroic efforts to cope with them. And if they are not more successful than they are, a great deal of responsibility must rest with the British Government to whose imperialist interests the welfare of India has been yoked.

Reading Miss Sen's book one understands why Mr. Andrew's arguments leave one a little cold. The tone is a little too apologetic to please Indian readers. Miss Sen, on the other hand, writes with enthusiasm, and is therefore able to convey to the reader something of the new and great revolutionary spirit that is shaping India's aspirations today. The India licking its sores to heal them is true enough ; but even truer is the India struggling with the chains that bind her. Taking her cue from Halidé Edib's *Inside India*, she has attempted a picture of her people's struggle in terms of the significant personalities that are inspiring or guiding it. It is easy to see that she herself is not in the struggle, for her descriptions lack that intimate quality which comes of first-hand acquaintance. Nor has she the gift (which is the secret of John Gunther's success as a political journalist) of so arranging the material, juxtaposing fact and gossip, and manipulating the side-lights, as to catch all the significant traits and angularities of the object in view. Her language too is in places a little confusing for the reader. On page 93, she writes, "Jinnah always asserted that he was a true nationalist at heart, that he had only the interests of his community at heart." The irony, unfortunately, is unintentional. There are also slight inaccuracies of fact, which a little painstaking could easily have corrected. For example, Tagore's *Valmiki-Pratibha* (*sic*) was published when the Poet was nineteen years of age and not fourteen as the book says (p. 57). Nor was it in 1921 that the Poet renounced his knighthood. It is also news to us to know that Abdul Ghaffar Khan is ordinarily "clad in a handspun *dhoti*", unless by *dhoti* the author means any lower garment. Her gallery of distinguished Indian women includes Mrs. P. K. Ray, "a leading woman educationist", and Miss Batliwalla, who "acted as secretary to Jawaharlal Nehru during his last European tour", but has no place for such genuine and passionate political workers as Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Satyavati Devi of Delhi or Malati Chaudhuri of Orissa, not to mention several heroic names from among the released detenues of her own province Bengal.

However, these are minor deficiencies which must in no way prejudice the reader. For it is, on the whole, an eminently readable book that Miss Sen has written. The pen-pictures of Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Jinnah are well drawn. The chapter on Terrorism is written with admirable sympathy and insight and we hope the English

reader, whose righteous indignation is so easily provoked by press reports of Nazi concentration camps, will excuse the author if she causes him a blush or two.

K. R. Kripalani.

"WE DIDN'T ASK UTOPIA" : Harry and Rebecca Timbres.

Prentice-Hall Inc. New York, \$2.50.

"WHAT Harry Timbres would have liked, and what I hope," writes Walter Duranty in his foreword, "is that you who read this book will do so. . . to get from it what he wanted to give you, kinder and deeper understanding of the U.S.S.R. . . in terms of human hope and work." That this was truly the dominating strain in the complex "concern" which drew him to Russia, may be seen in the letter in which Harry Timbres lays before his wife the pros and cons in the light of which the final decision must be taken to go on with, or withdraw from, the adventure. "At present and for some time to come," he writes humbly, "anything that we can do here can be done just as well, or better, by a Russian . . . On the other hand, our being here may deepen the understanding of Russia among a large group of Americans." With this major desire others mingled—the wish to study the development of the Communist state, whose beginnings the Timbres had seen in their early relief work in 1920-22 ; the desire to understand "socialised medicine" and its possibilities as a creative factor in social regeneration ; the hope that in Russia their children would have unique educational opportunities. But they were, above all, to be interpreters of one country to the other.

Many in Visva-Bharati knew and loved Harry and Rebecca Timbres during the five years when they made Sriniketan their headquarters of medical work. In June 1936, they found the way clear for a return to the Russia which they had grown to love in the post-war famine days, and where they hoped to find needed and valuable work to do in the fight against preventible disease. Acting on what proved to be wise advice, Harry went alone, and Rebecca and the children followed three months later when the initial obstacles and uncertainties had been overcome. Harry was posted in August to the medical staff of a pioneer anti-malaria unit in a remote district, and his family joined him there, to share the crowded, ascetically simple living conditions of up-country Russia. They filled autumn, winter and the following spring with strenuous, forward-looking work. Then came swift tragedy—the sudden death of Harry from typhus, just when his work

seemed on the point of most promising expansion in value and opportunity—and the chapter is closed.

The book which has now been published is the intimate record of those crowded, significant months, and consists of Harry's letters to his family during their separation, followed by Rebecca's diary for the remainder of the time. It is thus no formally ordered, leisurely record of life in Russia, still less an attempt to generalise or formulate the "truth" about her. Its vivid, readable pages—now rollicking in high-spirited fun, now piercing in a phrase to the enduring values—are all the more convincing as an essentially true picture of the daily life of ordinary folk in Russia.

Essentially true, and fundamentally attractive. The Timbres make no secret of their sympathetic interest in the Communist experiment ; and men, whether individuals or nations, are better understood by friends than foes. But it is a clear-sighted sympathy, not afraid to face difficulties or to admit mistakes ; it is plain that the Timbres regard the Russian method of progress by constructive self-criticism as one of the most hopeful features that they have to record. The picture is of a young nation, coming "like a confident shout" into the battle of life, hardworking, soundly trained, generous, idealistic. A nation struggling against gigantic obstacles, with little energy yet for the smooth externals of life, whose achievements must be measured by what has already been won from chaos and famine, not by its distance from Western standards of comfort and plenty. A land where talent is recognised and encouraged, where a peasant girl may be trained as an architect, and a country lad as an opera singer ; above all, where the humblest drudge may understand, in a spirit of dedicated enthusiasm, the larger purpose of his work. Such are the glimpses of Russia which the Timbres appreciate and describe, and being of the same stuff themselves, they do not whine when Russian ways bring personal difficulties, as they do. They "didn't ask Utopia".

But the book is more than a window, however fascinating, into intimate Russian life. It is, as the foreword claims, a memorial to a man. Those who knew Harry Timbres will surely catch in it the very tones of his voice and his infectious laugh. To those of us who never had that privilege it is a fresh revelation of the riches of consecrated human personality. There is practically no direct reference to religion in these pages, but they are full of the spirit that invests the commonplaces of life with interest and lovely meaning. When we have laughed at the jokes he enjoys, and shared his zest for work and play ; when we have seen through his eyes the majesty of dawn in the forest and the pageantry of sunset over the Volga ; when we have known his quiet enthusiasm, his patient self-restraint, his intellectual and spiritual honesty ; and when, most intimately of all, we

have been admitted to that circle of family loyalty and affection which meant so much, we shall feel we have made a most enheartening friend. It could not have been altogether easy for Rebecca Timbres to publish these family records, and they deserve to be widely read. They will assuredly "deepen the understanding of Russia" not only in the United States but wherever they go. They will no less certainly prove a potent tonic, in days of discouragement, to those who are trying to make, in their own lives, some contribution to the well-being of their fellow-men.

(Miss) Marjorie Sykes.

THE NYAYA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE :—by Dr. S. C. Chatterjee,

M. A., Ph.D., P.R.S., Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University

(Published by the University of Calcutta, 1939).

IT gives us very great pleasure to welcome this unique volume on a subject, about which none is known to have written hitherto so ably and fully in English or in any of the modern languages in India. Great credit must be given to the author for the undertaking in which he does not appear to have spared any pains for the completion of the work in the admirable manner he has done. The writing is not based on any particular work on Nyaya, but has utilised many authoritative relevant sources—both ancient and modern—in the execution of the task, so thoughtfully schemed and elaborately worked out. The ground covered is made so systematically extensive, that there appears to remain nothing that could be desired more in the treatment of the subject. A special feature of the work is its comparative and critical exposition of topics dealt with in the body of the work, so that a reader of the work may easily have some knowledge in one place how the logical, and also partly epistemological, problems have been handled by the different prominent schools of Indian Thought. The positions of the modern Western Logicians have been aptly brought in for comparison at critical points and treated both appreciatively and denunciatively, where they need it. This enhances the value of the work for those who are either fresh students of the subject or are eager to study the subject thoroughly in a comparative and critical manner. The exposition of the intricate topics brought in for treatment is on the whole clear, although a close reader may find it a little difficult to follow the author at places unhesitatingly. But they are few and far between. The only defect, if it can at all be called a defect in the treatment of a subject little studied with intelligent attention, is the prolixity of

style and the manner of presentation. There are a good many repetitions, which might have been avoided. But this is no positive defect of the work, which to the mind of the present reviewer, has been adequately and admirably done. The execution evinces clearly the years of devoted study and critical thought which the author has judiciously given to the subject. I must congratulate the author for the publication, which is bound to be appreciated by interested scholars both in India and outside, who would like to study the subject through the medium of English, the original Sanskrit sources being unapproachable to them.

P. B. Adhikari.

POETRY FROM THE SINHALESE. Being Selections from Folk and Classical Poetry, with Sinhalese Text. Put into English by
GEORGE KEYT. (The Colombo Apothecaries Co.,
Ltd., Colombo, Ceylon. 1938.)

THIS very excellent selection of Sinhalese Poetry will be useful to all those interested in the Art and Culture of Ceylon as well as to those who study Folk Poetry in general and especially that of the East.

The translator, Mr. George Keyt, has done well to emphasise in his Preface the exclusiveness of Sinhalese poetry : indeed it would be a vain attempt to look for any western influence in the Folk poetry of Ceylon. To approach this kind of poetry which is deeply rooted in the very soil of Ceylon with Western literary prejudices would lead to a misinterpretation. On the other hand, it seems possible, and perhaps would be very useful, to compare the folk poetry of Ceylon with that of India or of any other country where the folk element has remained pure throughout the ages. This comparison would no doubt open new vistas with regard to the psychology and sociology of the poetic process among "primitive" people. A selection of this kind would help us not only to enjoy the unsophisticated and genuine poetry of an age-old civilisation, it will also lead us towards a deeper understanding of the attitudes and concepts of all those poets who are as yet far away from the uprootedness of the west and its chronic disillusion.

The translation, which at times seems to be slightly too literal, is however well done. Those unable to read Sinhalese will appreciate this translation and will find in this book what Mr. George Keyt promised in his Preface : "A pleasant avenue leading into the little known and seemingly foreign world of Sinhalese Poetry."

A. Aronson.

EASTERN RELIGIONS AND WESTERN THOUGHT :

by S. Radhakrishnan (The Oxford University Press,
1939, Price 15s.).

It is a pleasure to welcome the publication of these Lectures by the renowned author, delivered during the years 1936-8 from the newly created Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the Oxford University. The work presents, we hope, only the first series of his learned addresses, meant not only for the students of the University, but for a larger and wider circle of readers interested in the bewildering problems of the day, in their satisfactory solution from a level of thought and action, which is truly and deeply human. As the author himself states in the Preface :

"The supreme task of our generation is to give a soul to the growing world consciousness, to develop ideals and institutions necessary for the creative expression of the world soul, to transmit these loyalties and impulses to future generations and train them into world citizens. To this great work of creating a new pattern of living, some of the fundamental insights of Eastern religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, seem to be particularly relevant, and attempt is made in these lectures to indicate them."

Taking up his stand on what he considers to be the true and real nature of the human self, he finds it to lie in its *universality*, where man is *man*, irrespective of his raciality and nationality, which are but its outer sheaths and crusts. And he indicates where this universal character of man has found its best and fittest expression. That is found, he thinks, in true *Mysticism* alone—a term which has borne different meanings in the history of religious thought and has been interpreted differently in different religious practices. The author has attempted to extricate from the current misconceptions the true idea of the mystical spirit, and shown that the attitude underlying the idea is not something to be dreaded but is, on the contrary, the only religious attitude that can unite man with man. This is the Religion, he asserts, which alone can solve the problems of the present-day life, whether individual, social or national, and even international. This is the ideal of life demanded by the age. To quote his words :

"It seems to me that in the mystic traditions of the different religions we have a remarkable unity of spirit. Whatever religions they may profess, the mystics are spiritual kinsmen. While the different religions in their historical forms bind us to limited groups and militate against the development of loyalty to the world community, the mystics have always stood for the fellowship of humanity. They transcend the tyranny of names and the rivalry of creeds as well as the conflict of races and strife of nations.

As the religion of spirit, mysticism avoids the two extremes of dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial. All signs indicate that it is likely to be the religion of the future."

The above statements, quoted from the Preface, about the value of the mystical spirit in the religious attitude of man, and the optimistic idea expressed in the last sentence, might not find general acceptance with the bulk of the thinkers of the present day. However, the author has done his best to justify his thesis in the lectures bearing upon the different relevant aspects of the subject. In doing so, he has tried to show that there are mystical elements pervading the different religions which form their core and which are evident in their historical origins. By way of illustration, he has admirably dealt with the different chief religions of the East and West, and has judiciously utilised for the purpose historical materials, much of which is not widely known even among noted scholars. He traces the origin of this mystical tenor of the religions to the best of what India has thought and done in the field, referring particularly to Hinduism and Buddhism, not in their later aspects and outer forms, but in their highest and truest spirit as found in their profound teachings. Yet the author has not asserted anything either dogmatically or out of partiality to the faith his own nationality professes. He has been very cautious, in making his statements and observations. He offers the historical facts, as far as they have been ascertained, and leaves the conclusions to his readers.

The last lecture bearing the title, "The Individual and the Social Order in Hinduism", might appear to a casual reader to be a departure from the general plan of the work as indicated above. But a closer study of the section will show that he has not really departed from the adopted course of his treatment, but offers here an illustration of how the religious spirit of a particular ancient nation, like the Hindu, has shaped its ideal of individual life and its social organisation. As the author puts it (in section II of the chapter) : "In dealing with any social organisation, we must enquire into the essential ideas on which it is founded, the conception of life which inspires it, and the forms which these ideas of life assume." And then the author goes on to give a critical account of the Hindu views of the individual and his relation to society by referring to "synthesis and gradation" of

(a) The fourfold object of life (*pursārtha*)—*Kāma*, *Artha*, *Dharma* and *Moksa*.

(b) The fourfold order of society (*varna*)—*Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*.

(c) The fourfold succession of stages (*āśrama*)—*Brahmacaria*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* and *Samnyasin*.

In giving an appreciative account of the nature of each of the above and the purpose or meaning underlying each, the author has not, however, spared to mention the defects that are found in them in their present-day outward practices and has suggested, by way of remedying them, how the institutions have to be shaped anew in the light of the modern circumstances of life while not abandoning the spirit which originally gave rise to the institutions.

P. B. Adhikari.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN INDIA: by N. Gangulee, Ph. D.

With a foreword by Sir John Orr, F. R. S.

(Faber and Faber Ltd., London. Price 15s. net.)

India presents a wide field of material to the biologist studying the problems of nutrition. The striking contrast in the physique and health of the races of the North with those of the South and East readily arrest his attention. The most important factor in the production of these differences is the food taken by these different races. The experiments of Macarrison at Coonoor clearly demonstrated the results of these different types of foods. Those whose diet is made up, for the most part, of denatured foodstuffs, such as polished rice, little or no milk or milk products, meat, fresh vegetables and fruits, are of poor physique and subject to diseases of many kinds. Millions of our people come within the latter category. To them the problem is not to obtain enough food of the *right* kind but to obtain enough food of *any* kind. Dr. Gangulee exhaustively deals with the problems responsible for the creation of the "chronic poor", with all the distressing symptoms resulting from the continuous undernourishment and malnutrition. In India poverty, serious maladjustments in economic life, age-worn social customs and ignorance have all contributed to make the problem of malnutrition almost a baffling one. But "this lamentable situation . . . is exacerbated by the third distinctive feature of the Indian economy, the domination of British Imperialism. . . . The fundamental purpose of a colonial empire is to supply a source of raw materials as well as to provide a market for manufactured goods. It is not therefore to the advantage of the imperialist country to foster the growth of either agriculture or industry in the countries under its control deliberately for the benefit of the indigenous people" (p. 25). He appeals therefore to the Indian National Congress who are now the Government in seven provinces, and in particular he appeals to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders who have undertaken to shape "a

national policy, based upon directed economy, for the re-habilitation of my country."

Dr. Gangulee deals with both sides of the problem of malnutrition in detail, the scientific side and the broader social side which must ensure the optimum diet to the community as a whole. On the scientific aspect of the problem he gives a very exhaustive account of the general principles of nutrition, of the consequences of dietary deficiencies, of the incidence of deficiency diseases in India, of Indian food-stuffs and dietaries and of recent researches on nutrition. This description, however, appears to be much too detailed and academic for the people for whom it is intended viz. legislators, economic and social welfare works.

Dr. Gangulee very ably and vigorously points out the measures that are necessary for the improvement of the nutrition of our people. Every one interested in the problem will find himself in complete agreement with his valuable suggestions.

Sir John Orr contributes an excellent foreward, in which he contrasts the problems of malnutrition in India with other parts of the world. We congratulate Dr. Gangulee on his excellent book so full of information. With ability and a justifiable passion, he advocates the measures which, in his opinion, will remove poverty, ignorance, apathy, maladjustments in economic life, age-worn social customs and all the defects of production, distribution and consumption of food. We commend the book to all interested in the well-being of our nation—specially to our Governments, legislators, economists, social and health workers.

Jayanta Kumar Bhattacharya,

M. B., D. P. H., D. T. M.

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

Vol. V, Part III, New Series

November 1939—January 1940

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THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

November

New Series, Vol. V, Part III

1939

A SONG FROM THE KHYBER PASS

Sarojini Naidu

WOLVES of the mountains,
Hawks of the hills,
We live or perish,
As Allah wills.

Two gifts for our portion
We ask thee, O Fate !
A maiden to cherish,
A kinsman to hate.

Children of danger,
Comrades of death,
The wild scent of battle
Is breath of our breath.

More bright than the scarlet
On dawn clouds displayed
Is the colour of life-blood
That gleams on our blade.

And lovelier than cymbals
That sound from the plain
Is the wail of the vanquished
Bemoaning their slain.

Yet sweet in the twilight
When tumult has ceased,
When red feuds are sated
And honour appeased,—

Aloft in our watch towers
Our arms to ungird,
And quaff foaming goblets
Of honey and curd.

And sweet in the stillness
And fragrance of night,
To find for a pillow
Twin moons of delight ;

To find for a curtain
A tent of dark tresses,
And crowning our valour
A wreath of caresses.

Wolves of the mountains,
Hawks of the hills,
We live or perish,
As Allah wills.

THE IDEALISM OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Dr. P. T. Raju, M.A., Ph.D.*

TAGORE is one of the few philosophers who are great poets. And he is one of the few poets that have themselves given expression to their philosophy. His poetical works may be more widely read than his philosophical works, yet the former cannot be fully understood without the latter, which are their open sesame. The central theme of his poetry is the mystery of creation, which is also the subject matter of philosophy. No high class poet can be satisfied with things mundane or with things as they are. Tagore is not satisfied with mere lyrical outbursts, which are passionate cries against this or that imperfection in the world. He does not give us merely some scattered insights into this or that aspect of our experience. But like a true philosopher he sees the world as a whole, though from his own poet's point of view. Hence though he is a lyrical poet *par excellence*, yet in a very important sense he is a great epic poet. For, as in any great epic, in his works taken as a whole, we see the picture of the whole life and world as depicted from a particular view-point.

Love and death are the eternal themes of poetry. Men are happy when they love, but tremble before death. This raises the problem for philosophy as well. In the *Katha Upanishad* the question, what becomes of man after death, is raised and the

*The author is too well-known an interpreter of Indian Philosophy to need an introduction to our readers. The above article was originally delivered by him as one of a series of Extension Lectures on "Idealistic Thought of India" at the Andhra University. We are glad of this opportunity to publish the learned article in our Journal. We would, however, like to make it clear that the interpretation, or rather the particular emphasis placed on certain aspects of Rabindranath's thought as given therein, is entirely the author's own. We cannot help wishing that could the learned author have drawn as freely from Rabindranath's Bengali writings, in particular his songs and poems which embody his most direct perception and the subtlest expression of his idealism, as he has done from his English writings, the exposition would have gained considerably in scope.—*Ed.*

answer to it is valued as higher than even the undivided sovereignty of the earth. But what is the nature of love? If the nature of death too is the same in essence, or if the process of death can be turned into that of love, do not love and death ultimately become identical? Is not the fear of death then overcome? And does not death become as pleasant as love? That it does is what Rabindranath Tagore wants to prove. It is the basic idea of his works. No love is true love unless the lover is prepared to sacrifice and surrender his self to his beloved object. It is therefore the same in essence as the death of his ego. Death is fearful when we value our petty individual self as superior to the universal Self, that is, when we do not love God; otherwise, it would be the same as love.

This is the truth of the cult of *bhakti* or devotion advocated by Vaishnavism, as Tagore interprets it. The Supreme Being is a Person. He is full of love; his nature is love. He makes his advances in innumerable ways. Only we have to understand them. Tagore's poetry depicts the various ways in which the Supreme Person expresses his nature.

We are concerned mainly with the philosophical side of Tagore's ideas. His chief philosophical works are *Sadhana*, *Creative Unity*, *Personality*, and the *Religion of Man*. *Gitanjali*, his famous work, is a philosophical poem. The theism of Rabindranath Tagore is said by some to be a borrowing from Christianity. But this opinion has been once for all disproved; for it was based on the wrong assumption that India had no theism of its own. The discovery of the importance of Vaishnavism besides that of Saiva theism among Hindu religions, with its cult of *bhakti* or devotion, gave the lie to it. It has, of course, to be admitted that the Brahma Samaj to which Tagore belongs was not uninfluenced by Christianity.¹ But the influence

1. As a matter of fact, Rabindranath does not belong to that branch of the Brahma Samaj which "was not uninfluenced by Christianity." He belongs to the Adi or Original Brahma Samaj which drew its inspiration from the Upanishads and did much to counteract the anti-Hindu propaganda of some Christian missions.—*Ed.*

of Christianity went only so far as to make the theistic elements of ancient Hinduism popular with the learned leaders of the Brahma Samaj.

Though Tagore is a Vaishnava,¹ he is a Vaishnava in his own way. He calls his Supreme Person *advaitam*,² and his Vaishnavism, we may say, is Vaishnava *Advaita*. He does not seem to have any logical objection to the impersonal Absolute of Sankara. He writes : "In India, there are those whose endeavour is to merge completely their personal self in an impersonal entity which is without any quality or definition ; to reach a condition wherein mind becomes perfectly blank, losing all its activities. Those who claim the right to speak about it say that this is the purest state of consciousness, it is all joy without any object or content. This is considered to be the ultimate end of *Yoga*, the cult of union, thus completely to identify one's being with the infinite Being who is beyond all thoughts and words. Such realization of transcendental consciousness, accompanied by a perfect sense of bliss, is a time-honoured tradition in our country, carrying in it the positive evidence which cannot be denied by any negative argument of refutation. Without disputing its truth, I maintain that it may be valuable as a great psychological experience but all the same it is not religion, even as the knowledge of the ultimate state of the atom is of no use to an artist who deals in images in which atoms have taken forms."³ The impersonal Absolute may be the scientific truth, but as a poet and a human being, Tagore would not have much to do with it. Man can take interest in the Absolute only if it is humanised. He says : "As our religion can only have its significance in this phenomenal world comprehended by our human self, this absolute conception of Brahman is outside the subject of my discussion. What I have tried to bring out in

1. Unfortunately Vaishnavism has become a cult and has been associated with such practices of excessive emotionalism that it is doubtful how far Rabindranath would relish being called a Vaishnav, even though "a Vaishnav in his own way".—*Ed.*

2. *Creative Unity*, p. 4. *Sadhana*, pp. 85, 154, and 156. *The Religion of Man*, p. 66.

3. *The Religion of Man*, p. 117.

this book¹ is the fact that whatever name may have been given to the divine Reality it has found its highest place in the history of our religion owing to its human character, giving meaning to the idea of sin and sanctity, and offering an eternal background to all the ideals of perfection which have their harmony with man's own nature."² So Tagore understands the Absolute as the Supreme Man,³ God humanised.⁴ It is personality, the Supreme Person. But what is this personality? "Limitation of the unlimited is personality: God is personal when he creates."⁵ That is, the Absolute, as Sir Radhakrishnan puts it, when pressed into the moulds of our thought, becomes a person. Obviously, Tagore does not deny the truth of the impersonal Absolute. Only he insists that if it is to be understood by human beings, it must be understood as a person.

But like a true *advaitin*, Tagore maintains that the Absolute Person is the only reality. The finite has no separate reality. And what is the ideal of the finite *jiva*? It is thorough merging or dissolving in the Absolute. It is complete self-sacrifice without any residue, it is fully surrendering the individuality of the *jiva*. This is what the cult of *bhakti* or love preaches. By this process the *jiva* becomes absolutely one with the Supreme Person. "As science is the liberation of our knowledge in the universal reason, which cannot be other than human reason, religion is the liberation of our individuality in the universal Person who is human all the same."⁶ "The individual *I am* attains its perfect end when it realises its freedom of harmony in the infinite *I am*. Then is its *mukti*, its deliverance from the thralldom of *maya*, of appearance which springs from *avidya*, from ignorance; its emancipation in *santam sivam advaitam*, in the perfect repose in truth, in the perfect activity

1. *The Religion of Man*.

2. *Ibid*, p. 205.

3. *Ibid*, p. 118.

4. *Ibid*, p. 17.

5. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 37.

6. *The Religion of Man*, p. 198.

in goodness, and in the perfect union in love.”¹ “Intellect sets us apart from the things to be known, but love knows its object by fusion.”² “Our soul can only become Brahman as the river can become the sea.”³ “The highest wisdom in the East holds that it is not the function of our soul to *gain* God, to utilise him for any special material purpose. All that we can ever aspire to is to become more and more one with God.”⁴ But in the sphere of religion so long as God remains humanised as an object of love, love implies unity as well as duality. “In love all the contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. Only in love are unity and duality not at variance. Love must be one and two at the same time. Only love is motion and rest in one. Our heart ever changes its place till it finds love, and there it has its rest. But this rest itself is an intense form of activity where utter quiescence and unceasing energy meet at the same point in love.”⁵

This shows that Tagore places love higher than knowledge as the way that leads to the Brahman. Knowledge involves the distinction between subject and object, and where there is no such distinction there is no knowledge. But love aims at fusion or union. The distinction between subject and object vanishes in it. Yet love is not without knowledge. Only it is consummation of knowledge. “. . . he (God) can be known by joy, by love. For joy is knowledge in its completeness, it is knowing by our whole being. Intellect sets us apart from the things to be known, but love knows its object by fusion. Such knowledge is immediate and admits no doubt. It is the same as knowing our own selves, only more so.”⁶ “Want of love is a degree of callousness ; for love is the perfection of consciousness. We do

1. *Sadhana*, p. 85.

2. *Ibid*, p. 159

3. *Ibid*, p. 156.

4. *Ibid*, pp. 154-5.

5. *Ibid*, p. 114.

6. *Ibid*, p. 159.

not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment ; it is truth ; it is the joy that is at the root of all creation. It is the white light of pure consciousness that emanates from Brahman. So, to be one with this *sarvanubhuh*, this all-feeling being who is in the external sky, as well as in our inner soul, we must attain to that summit of consciousness, which is love. . . . It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love, and extending it all over the world, that we can attain *Brahma-vihara*, communion with the infinite joy.”¹

What does Tagore mean by saying that love is the perfection of our knowledge ? Is it a mystic utterance the *raison d'être* of which cannot be understood ? It simply means that truth is a unity, and that knowledge, if it is to be true, must comprehend that unity. But this unity cannot be experienced, Tagore maintains, except through love. For love is the only form of experience that comprehends unity. Intellect, on the other hand, cannot do away with the distinction between the subject and object, that is, with duality. It, of course, aims at unity, that is, truth ; but its own natural limitations, the very condition of its existence, namely, the duality of the subject and the object, precludes it from completely realising its aim. So long as this duality lasts, the core of the object can never be entered into by the subject, and knowledge at this level cannot be beyond doubt. Like Descartes it is always possible for us to doubt the existence of our object, to ask the question, is it a dream or hallucination ? But when the subject can penetrate the heart of the object, its very core and existence, it cannot and does not doubt the truth of the latter. But this penetration means identity and disappearance of duality. It means transcending the level of intellect. As Bradley puts it, thought in order to attain its ideal perfect truth, must become reality ; but in order to become reality it

1. *Ibid*, pp. 106-7.

must destroy itself, for one of the conditions of its being is the distinction from reality and this distinction has now to be transcended. That is, the form of consciousness at the level of intellect must be changed into that of intuition. The comprehension of unity is called intuition from the standpoint of knowledge and love from the standpoint of human experience. As Tagore's philosophy aims at understanding the Supra-human in terms of the human, he calls it love.

Then what is the truth that our intellect can attain ? ' What is truth for it ? Tagore is not an academical philosopher, and so we do not get a definite answer to this question. But his utterances seem to support the coherence view, and remind us of Spinoza. He writes : "What is the truth of this world ? It is not in the masses of substance, not in the number of things, but in their relatedness, which neither can be counted, nor measured, nor abstracted. It is not in the materials which are many, but in the expression which is one. *All our knowledge of things is knowing them in their relation to the Universe, in that relation which is truth.*"¹ Just as Spinoza tells us that true knowledge consists in understanding the Modes in their relation to the one eternal Substance, Tagore tells us that true knowledge of things consists in knowing them in their relation to the supreme principle of unity. Of course Supreme Truth, even according to Tagore, must be beyond coherence. As an *advaitin* he has to admit that it transcends coherence. However, to press this technical question is to be unfair to the poet.

Just as Spinoza tells us that Substance is the only reality and yet there is difference between man and mouse and the two are not equally Substance, Tagore maintains that though God is everything, everything is not equally God. That is, Tagore admits degrees or levels of reality. In the empirical world man is the highest reality, because he approaches the idea of the Supreme Person closer than anything else. And it cannot be

1. *Creative Unity*, p. 5. Italics mine.

otherwise, because the Supreme Person is the Absolute humanised. Tagore mentions the *Upanishads* as his support, according to which "the key to cosmic consciousness, to God-consciousness, is in the consciousness of the soul."¹ One may detect a circle or *petitio principii* in this argument. For why is man of all creatures nearest to God? Because he conceived God in his own image. The same attitude is sometimes criticised as anthropomorphism. But Tagore would say that we as human beings cannot but think as human beings.

But if man is essentially identical with the Supreme Person and so infinite, why does the former experience finitude? How are we to account for his finitude? Tagore says that it is due to *maya* or *avidya*. It is an appearance and is not ultimately real. He writes: "Logically speaking, the distance between two points, however near, may be said to be infinite, because it is infinitely divisible. But we *do* cross the infinite at every step, and meet the eternal in every second. Therefore some of our philosophers say there is no such thing as finitude; it is but a *maya*, an illusion. The real is the infinite, and it is only *maya*, the unreality, which causes the appearance of the finite. But the word *maya* is a mere name, it is no explanation. It is merely saying that with truth there is this appearance which is the opposite of truth; but how they come to exist at one and the same time is incomprehensible."² But *maya* is not understood by Tagore as Sankara understands it. For Sankara it is neither real nor unreal: it neither is nor is not. But for Tagore it both is and is not. The followers of Vallabha sometimes use the words *maya* and *avidya* to denote that the experience of our separateness from the Brahman is only an appearance. But this *maya* is for them not a metaphysical entity. It is just ignorance that clouds our intellect and makes us see difference where difference is not. Tagore's conception of *maya* resembles

1. *Sadhana*, p. 80.

2. Cp. *Ato'smatpratyaayo bhrānto māyāṛtaviḷokanāt*. Hariraya: *Brahmavada sangraha*, p. 1.

that of Vallabha, though the latter does not treat it as a metaphysical entity which both is and is not. *Maya*, according to Tagore, has being, because finitude is experienced ; but it is non-being also because when our infinitude is realised it vanishes. Vallabha and his followers definitely reject Sankara's doctrine of *maya* and *upādhi*, and maintain that when they speak of the finitude of the *jiva* and his separateness from the Brahman they do not mean this.¹ The world is not unreal for them because it is a product of the Brahman. Unreality cannot come out of reality. Tagore certainly speaks of the world as unreal, as having no explanation and so forth. On this point also his view differs from that of Vallabha. Tagore says that the separateness of our self from the Brahman is an illusion or *maya*, "because it has no intrinsic reality of its own."² He pictures *maya* as the smoke that envelops fire and presages it.³ He speaks of it also as the process by which finitude is woven by the Supreme Person just as the artist weaves the art-product out of his imagination.⁴ Yet in spite of Tagore's treating the world as unreal also, one can easily see the similarity between his and Vallabha's positions. Anyway Tagore's *maya* is not that of Sankara.

Though Tagore calls the world *maya*, he maintains that it is of greater interest to us than the pure reality of the indeterminate and impersonal Brahman. We are interested in the Brahman not in its purity but as the *Mayavin* or the agent of *maya*, the person who weaves the web of appearance. We are concerned with him as the artist who has painted the picture of this world.⁵ It is the drawing or painting which is of value for us, and not the canvas on which it is done. The Brahman as the ground on which the world is superimposed has no value for us.

What is the relation of the Supreme Person to the manifold

1. *Ibid*, pp. 82-87.

2. *Sadhana*, p. 79.

3. *Ibid*, p. 80.

4. *The Religion of Man*, p. 141.

5. *Creative Unity*, p. 10.

of appearance? He is the unity of the manifold. He is the creative unity, not merely the organic unity. It is the presence of this unity that turns the manifold into a rhythm and harmony. Just as a true poem is not a construction according to the rules of rhyme and metre, but an expression or creation, so also the world is not a construction but an expression or creation. That is, the world is not created according to certain previously formulated laws, but is the expression of a single unity that diversifies itself; and the laws automatically formulate themselves *pari passu* with creation. The so-called laws are the reflections of unity in diversity, and the Supreme Unity therefore is the law of all laws. Tagore gives the example of a musical tune that expresses itself in various notes, and in which the notes have no meaning apart from the tune. Similarly, the world of the manifold loses its significance unless understood as the expression of an underlying unity.

If the Supreme Person is the law of all laws, if the so-called laws are the reflections of his unity in the manifold, then these laws will not be felt as restraining the activity and limiting the freedom of the finite human being if he surrenders his individuality to the Supreme Person and becomes one with him. Becoming one with him means losing ourselves in him through love. As we have already pointed out, according to Tagore, it is through love only that we can experience truth or the final unity. That is, we can transcend the restraint of law only through love. He writes: "It is only those who have known that joy expresses itself through law who have learnt to transcend the law."¹ Only when we transcend law through love can we experience our freedom. Freedom is not absence of all law, which is another name for chaos. It is to make the laws one's own. Joy, love, or unity expresses itself in various ways, which are the laws. The moment we realise our oneness with the Supreme Unity the laws become the forms of expression of our joy and lose their unpleasantness.

1. *Sadhana*, p. 119.

To realise our oneness with the Supreme Person is our highest aim in life, the greatest *dharmā*. "We fulfil our destiny when we go back from form to joy ; from law to the love, when we untie the knot of the finite and hark back to the infinite." ¹ But what is this *dharmā* ? It is truth, law, existence, norm, and reality. Tagore says : "The Sanscrit word *dharmā* which is usually translated into English as religion has a deeper meaning in our language. *Dharmā* is the innermost nature, the essence, the implicit truth, of all things. *Dharmā* is the ultimate purpose that is working in our self. When any wrong is done we say that *dharmā* is violated, meaning that the law has been given to our true nature."² "Only when the tree begins to take shape do you come to see its *dharmā*, and then you can affirm without doubt that the seed which has been wasted and allowed to rot in the ground has been thwarted in its *dharmā*, in the fulfilment of its true nature."³ Thus *dharmā* is ideal or destiny. The Supreme Man is the *dharmā* of the finite man.⁴ But he is the law of all laws : he is what makes the so-called laws laws. Hence the ideal of man is the truth of the whole world. It is the ideal towards which the whole creation moves.

The peculiarity of Tagore's *Advaita* is that though it soars high and does not avoid the greatest speculative heights, it still wants to retain its hold on the lower levels of reality. Tagore is a mystic, but his mysticism is no bar to his interest in the temporal world. The value of his thought lies in the way he tries to reconcile the results of the *Advaita* with active interest in the practical world. The values of this world are not to be shunned. Asceticism and *jñānamarga* or the path of knowledge to truth are not the only ways of realising the Brahman. So long as we are human, to ask us to renounce the world, to exhort us to avoid its experiences, is to ask us to

1. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

4. *The Religion of Man*, p. 144.

jump out of our skin. Asceticism and indifference to the values of the world cannot enable us to realise the underlying unity. The desire to be aloof from the world leads only to duality. It is only love, which is active unification, that can make us realise our aim of life. Thus there is an interesting blend in Tagore's thought of Vaishnavism and its cult of *Bhakti* with the *Advaita*. This is not absolutely a new feature of Indian thought. The philosophy of Vallabha, which has not received the due attention it rightly deserves from contemporary Indian thinkers, is Vaishnava *Advaita*. And Tagore's philosophy reminds us of Vallabha's. There are of course some differences, which we have pointed out. But the general tendency is the same in both. Both feel that logically the *Advaita* is irrefutable, and yet both refuse to regard the world which is a product of the Brahman as unreal and uninteresting. God is the ultimate principle of unity, and love, even Vallabha would say with Tagore, is the only form of experience in which differences are transcended.

MAITRI-SADHANA*

(THE PATH OF UNIVERSAL LOVE)

INTRODUCTION

Prof. P. B. Adhikari

THERE is an idea widely prevalent, particularly in the West, that love of humanity has no place in Indian Philosophy or Religion, and that the sentiment, where it is found to appear to-day in the land, is a borrowed one, being imbibed through and from the literature of the West, particularly from Christianity and the philosophy of life influenced by that faith. The opinion is excusable in the general public who are innocent of Indian thought and practice as taught in its ancient literature. They get the impression generally from what they believe to be true, from the writings, philosophical or otherwise, of those who are regarded as authorities on the subject. The wonder is that the opinion is endorsed even by some responsible Indologists otherwise noted for their scholarship in the literature of Indian Thought and Religion. The essay following this introduction, written on the basis of original ancient texts, is meant to dispel this mistaken idea by showing to what extent and depth the spirit of *Maitri* (universal love) was carried in our teachings. The writing offers ample illustration of the value that was put on the cultivation of this virtue, and the discipline of the mind needed for the purpose, in the general culture of the people of this land. A large number of the texts quoted in support of the thesis bear no doubt on the subject of the path of realisation (*sadhana*) of the virtue as taught in the *Madhyamika* School of Buddhism. It would be a mistake, however, to think, from

* Both the Introduction by Prof. Adhikari and the thesis following, by Pandit Sujit Mukherjee, are published here in an abridged form. The full versions, with complete original texts, etc. will shortly be published as a monograph by Visva-Bharati.—*Ed.*

these quotations, that the teaching and the spirit underlying it was confined to a narrow circle of Buddhists. To remove this possible mistake, texts have also been offered freely in support of the position from the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, *Bhagavat-Gita* and other relevant ancient writings bearing on the subject.

Now of the true meaning of the term *Maitri* and of the nature of the idea expressed by the term. There appears to be some difference of opinion in its adequate interpretation. In the yoga-system of Patanjali there is a *sutra* or aphorism in which the term is found to occur (vide Pada I, *sutra* 33), and *Maitri* is mentioned there as one of the four virtues the cultivation of which is enjoined as an indispensable discipline for the attainment of that purity and calm of mind (*citta-prasada*) without which the required concentration of consciousness (*yoga*) is impossible. It is difficult to give a definite idea, by an English equivalent term, of what exactly is meant by *maitri* here. It is found to have been variously rendered into English by eminent writers on the system and particularly on the *sutra* concerned here. This is not be wondered at, seeing that the term has been understood in somewhat different senses even by the commentators themselves. For instance, the original and authoritative commentator *Vyasa* on the system of Patanjali offers simply, on the basis of the *sutra* concerned, an explanation to the effect that *maitri* has to be cultivated as a *kindly* attitude of mind towards all living beings who are in the condition of enjoyment of pleasure or happiness. Vacaspati Misra, in his Gloss (*Vaisaradi*) on the commentary of Vyasa, explains the term as an attitude of sympathy (*sauharda*) towards those who are in a happy condition of life. Vijnanabhiksu in his *Yogavartika* renders the term simply by *Sauharda* (sympathy), and does not add anything more to elucidate the meaning. Other writers on the system do not appear to go further in their explanation of the term. Among English writers, mention may be particularly made here of the late Prof. Cecil Bendall who, in the learned Introduction to his edition of Santideva's *Siksa-samuccaya*, is found to render the term *maitri* by

charity at one place and at another place by *universal love* (as enjoined for one seeking *Bodhi* or highest enlightenment (*Bodhi-citta*). Of these various renderings of a Sanskrit term used in a peculiar and extensive sense, only the last one, namely *universal love*, may be said to come nearer to express the idea in a foreign tongue. But still this English version would not, it is feared, convey in an adequate way the full meaning of the term as used in the texts of the Buddhistic works quoted from. For instance, in the *Bodhi-caryavatara*, another notable work of the author of *Siksha-samuccaya*, the attitude of mind named *Maitri* is found to be likened (after the Vedic text quoted and giving the same sense) to the affection felt by parents to their children. The best way to have an adequate idea underlying the term would, therefore, be to refer to the texts themselves where it occurs, particularly the Buddhistic works quoted from, and to form oneself an idea of the meaning to be put on it. What is attempted below, by way of introduction, is to offer here in the briefest possible manner, an idea of the extent and depth to which the cultivation of the spirit of *Maitri* came to be enjoined in the Madhyamika School as a necessary discipline of the mind for the attainment of the condition of enlightenment, a condition characterising *Bodhisattvahood*, which is a preliminary indispensable stage in the final realisation of *Buddhahood*, according to the position of Mahayana Buddhism. The author of *Bodhicaryavatara* goes even to the extreme here by identifying the attitude of perfect *Maitri* with the realisation of the enlightenment (*Bodhi*) itself.

The author referred to above begins with the general definition of *Maitri* as consisting essentially in wide sympathy with the sufferings of living beings and selfless efforts to mitigate or remove them as far as possible. Next, an attempt is made to show how this noble attitude of mind and practice can be cultivated to its perfection and what should be the characteristics of the condition at its highest level. It is necessary to bear in mind in this connection the nature of the ideal which a *Bodhisattva*

sets before his mind and pursues with unstinted devotion, a Bodhisattva being one who has attained the highest level of enlightenment (Bodhi). The ideal is purely disinterested service, not of humanity alone, but of all living beings, removing their sufferings and helping them on to the attainment of that condition of freedom from all troubles which the enlightened ones have attained themselves. Though there is a positive joy of mind in this realisation, those who have it would not be fully happy until all others are made so with the same sort of realisation. But this identification of one's own self with the whole living world, suffering with their sufferings and joying with their enjoyments, is possible only by undergoing a systematic discipline of mind leading on to the attainment of the level of culture which is called here *maitri-bhava* (the attitude of *maitri*), otherwise regarded, and also called here, *Bodhi-citta* (the enlightened condition of mind). The first step in the discipline mentioned above is the exercise of thorough control over such passions of the mind, as anger, hatred, etc., which are likely to cause injury to others ; and this is possible only by the cultivation of the virtues that are opposed to them, so that the mind may be ultimately free from their operation. Among these virtues, that of *Forgiveness* (*Ksama*) is regarded as the basic one, and so it is extolled as of the highest value. A thorough cultivation of this virtue is even considered as an indispensable condition for the attainment of *Bodhi-citta*, of which the essence is, according to the position in point here, *maitri-bhava* (the virtue of *maitri* or universal love).

The question now arises : how to attain this high and noble culture of the mind. The position of the Madhyamika School is defended and expounded here on fine psychological analysis of the emotional aspect of the mind, coupled with its metaphysical standpoint of *Sunyavada* (falsely called *Nihilism*), and also its high ethical ideal of life as based on its psychology and metaphysics. Into the details of the doctrines advocated by the school it is not necessary to go in an Introduction like the present. In

the body of the texts quoted, some references have been given to them, inviting readers for further information to the original works which embody the treatment of the doctrines. It would not, however, be out of place to mention one special doctrine of the whole Buddhistic thought on which are ultimately based, directly, the teachings of the different schools. I mean the doctrine of *Pratitya-Samutpada* (Pali, *Paticca-Samuppada*), the Law of Universal Causation, or more correctly, the law of conditional origin of things or events (both of the world and of life). This doctrine is so highly valued in Buddhism that Nagarjuna, in his *Madhyamika sutra*, writes to the effect that true knowledge of this law in its universal application is an indispensable condition for the attainment of *Nirvana*.

Now let us see the use that is made here of the doctrine in connection with what has been stated above about the cultivation of the virtue of *Forgiveness*. If every event, according to the doctrine, is conditioned by its cause, the wrong that is done must be regarded as an event in the causal chain over which there is no control. Considered in this light, no sane man who has realised the truth of the inevitable causal law, can possibly have any intellectual or rational ground for getting offended for a wrong done to him. On the contrary this thought would bring about a calm attitude of forgiveness.

A doubt is sure to arise here as to the soundness of the Buddhistic position as an ethical measure or incentive. The use of the doctrine as illustrated above would rather be regarded as opposed to any moral initiative, because of its deterministic character. If good or evil is due to nobody's agency but comes about as an effect in the causal chain of events, then there is no one to be praised or blamed, rewarded or punished for what is called a *deed*, and there is no use undertaking any moral discipline for the cultivation of virtue. It has to be admitted that this doubt is likely to arise here. But that is because of ignorance of the psychological and philosophical considerations on which the teaching is based. *Determinism* is not *Fatalism*, and no system of

thought or of practice is more emphatic in denying their identity, or even similarity, than Buddhism itself. Supposing that there is determinism even in moral deeds, the nature of this determinism has to be understood from the Buddhistic standpoint : no foreign interpretation of this situation would do here. Moreover it has been sufficiently indicated that among the conditions which bring about an event, thought, feeling, will and effort have their rightful place. It is a marked characteristic of Buddhism as a system of thought that it does not admit any current ideas uncritically, nor does it repeat slavishly the formulae which embody them. Its special merit lies in the intellectual freedom displayed in its speculations. This has to be always borne in mind by the critics of Buddhistic ethics.

Speaking of Buddhistic ethics we now come to the extreme to which the standpoint was carried by the *Sunyavadins*. The position is too subtle, and naturally, therefore, less convincing to the mind of a reader whose life is led on the ordinary human level. The teaching would appear rather curious in its own way. It runs thus : the man who does me wrong helps me on by his act to cultivate the virtue of forgiveness and thereby advances me in the pursuit of *Bodhi* (enlightenment), the core of which is universal love (*maitri*) as founded on an abiding spirit of forgiveness. Is the man then to be regarded as a friend or a foe ? Certainly a friend, as he has, by his deed, however harmful that might appear to be to an onlooker, acted rather beneficially to me, although unaware of the good that he has thus rendered. If this *kindly* attitude could be cultivated and habitually maintained towards a wrong-doer, forgiveness would arise naturally in the mind of the sufferer. And this is the ideal of culture or self-discipline which must be cultivated by every devotee in the path of *Bodhi*, if he is to attain the goal. The attitude of *maitri*, it is further enjoined, must be characterised by this spirit of universal forgiveness. This last consideration shows how widely and deeply the idea of *maitri* was entertained by the Madhyamika school. No one is capable of attaining the status of a *Bodhi-sattva*,

nor deserves the name, until he has, by systematic discipline extending over years or ages, or even lives, so elevated his mental level that this attitude has become perfectly spontaneous, requiring no further exertion for its production or maintenance.

Now comes up a question in connection with the ideal teaching of the school as indicated briefly above. If a person causing pain to another does really a good to him by offering thereby an opportunity for the exercise of forgiveness and the cultivation of this virtue, then pain ceases to be an evil and causing pain to others is no moral sin. Why then is it inculcated that a man on the path to the achievement of *Bodhi* must cultivate widest possible sympathy for all suffering beings and should always be prepared to render unstinted service for the mitigation or removal of their miseries? Are not the two positions inconsistent with each other? How could we then expect a man, under the training and with the ideas inculcated, to feel the necessity of any service to his needy fellow-beings in misery? Would not the result of the training and the idea be the encouragement of an attitude of apathy (*upeksa*) to the sufferings of living creatures? The inconsistency, however, is more apparent than real. The following considerations may be offered in support of my point.

The teaching is, first of all, meant for one who is on the path of realisation of the ideal condition of *Bodhi*. Secondly, this high ideal does not offer any excuse for the neglect of the practice and discipline through and on the basis of which alone the necessary preparation has to be made before the true spirit of the ideal can be realised even in thought. The teaching begins by emphasising the point that so long as you yourself do not want to suffer pain but seek to remove it when it comes, there is no ground to allow its occurrence or continuance elsewhere. Pain and misery are by themselves undesirable things, irrespective of the place where they occur. If the condition is to be avoided in your case, it must be so in case of others. Thirdly, the spirit

of forgiveness enjoined here as a discipline does not mean that you are free to cause suffering to others with the object of helping them on to cultivate the spirit, nor does it mean to say that others are free to cause such trouble to their fellow beings without any stain of guilt. The fundamental principle is that this universal love and sympathy (*maitri*) should be cultivated by all.

In conclusion, it has been shown, on the basis of relevant texts quoted, that as a matter of fact the life of one who is on the path to *Bodhi* is not one of perpetual misery. It has no doubt its share of suffering arising out of its sympathetic or compassionate nature. But the amount of this suffering is negligible in comparison to the joy inherent in the noble condition achieved. At the same time, the teaching goes further in asserting the spirit of self-sacrifice to the effect that compassion (*karuna*) and the action which issues from it for the good of others is of much higher value than any such joy of life. The teaching goes even to the extent that this self-sacrifice for the good of all living beings is to be preferred to *Nirvana* itself. The ideal for which the Bodhisattva stands is thus no *personal* salvation, but the salvation of all ; no nirvana for one's self, but for all. A Bodhisattva would not crave for any personal good that cannot be equally shared with all. His personality has ceased to be and has been merged in others.

It is strange that there is still an impression prevalent in respectable quarters that the idea or sentiment of *humanitarianism* is conspicuous by its absence in Indian thought and practice. It is further held that where it is found to be taught in any philosophical system or as an item of religious practice it is always as a means to a further end beyond itself and never as an end in itself. This idea can hardly be upheld after perusal of the texts quoted.

MAITRI-SĀDHANĀ

OR

THE PATH OF UNIVERSAL LOVE

By Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya

FROM time immemorial there has existed in India a spiritual discipline (*sādhana*) for promoting and practising Universal Love (*maitri*—lit., Friendliness). Almost every educated Hindu has heard the following verse of the well-known hymn regarding *maitri* in the *Rig Veda* :

“Do ye concur ; be ye closely combined ; let your minds be concurrent.”

In all the *Vedas* there is a reference to this *sādhana*. The Rishi sings in the *Yajur Veda* :

“May all the creatures look at me with the eye of a friend. May I look at all creatures with the eye of a friend. Abandoning violence and enmity, may we treat one another as friends.”¹

In the *Atharva Veda* the Rishi sings :

“Make me dear to Brahmin and Kṣatriyas ; both to Śudra and to Ārya. Make me dear to those who see me, i.e., who are around me and to whomsoever we desire. Make me dear even to those who run after sin.”²

“Be your purpose the same, your hearts the same ; your minds the same so that it may be well for you together.”³

As every creature loves his offspring and nourishes it, so does he who has attained Universal Love, love and nourish Life.

“Like-heartedness, like-mindedness, non-hostility, do I

1. *Vājasenīya*, XXXVI-18. 2. *Atharva*, XIX-32-8, XIX-62-1. 3. *Rig*, X-191-4 ; *Atharva*, VI-64-2.

create for you ; do ye show affection one towards the other, as does the cow towards her new-born.”¹

Then all ill-will and hatred disappear, life is filled up with love for the pure and the impure, the high and the low ; they (those who have attained Universal Love) then dedicate themselves to the task of purifying the polluted, and elevating the low :

“O ye Brahmins, again raise the fallen, uplift the oppressed, purify the polluted, give new life to the sinner who is dying of sin.”²

This is not, however, the final stage in the Discipline ; there is still a higher stage ; for even to love others like one’s own son, is tainted with separateness. This barrier of separateness, too, must be crossed. One must look at Life as one indivisible whole :

“In this universe there is none else except me ; I alone exist ; I pervade it everywhere in myriads of forms. . . .”³

The universe is like a body with many limbs permeated by one soul ; when the ultimate stage in the Discipline is attained, this knowledge is born in the mind of the *sādhaka*.

“When all creatures have become one with the Self, then where is sorrow, where is delusion for the Wise One who sees unity ?”⁴

In this stage question of violence does not arise at all. Then love becomes natural. For who would not like ever to serve himself, or who would ever hurt himself ?

“As the same soul pervades equally every limb of the body, likewise in every atom of this vast universe there dwells the one person, or the one soul equally. He who has attained to this vision (of life), does never cause any injuries to himself ; and it is then only that one attains liberation.”⁵

1. *Atharva*, III-30-1. 2. *Rig*, X-137-1 ; *Atharva*, IV-13-1. 3. *Atharva*, XIX-51-1 ; *Chāndogyaopaniṣad*, VII-25-1. 4. *Vājasenīya*, XL-7. 5. *Gītā*, XIII-28.

Such is the Discipline as laid down by the Hindus who believe in the existence of the soul. Now let us consider the view-point of the Buddhists who deny the existence of the soul, for that is the special purpose of this essay.

It is necessary to mention here that both Buddhists and Hindus alike, accept the truth that Universal Love (*maitri*) is the soul of the spiritual discipline. Without this Universal Love there is no possibility of one's attaining liberation or realizing God.

According to the Yoga system, without concentration of the mind, union with reality (*yoga*) is impossible; and this concentration in its turn cannot be attained if the mind is impure or defiled. To remove the defilements or impurities of the mind, the *maitri* is indispensable.

"By the cultivation of friendliness in the happiness of others, compassion in their pain, and joy in their merit, and indifference to their demerit, the undisturbed calm of the mind is attained."¹

In the Hindu scriptures, love of all (creatures) is love of God; reverence for all is reverence for God. Worshipping God by disregarding Life defeats the very end in view.

"I dwell always as the soul in every one. Disregarding every manifestation of Mine, man mocks at Me, by worshipping stocks and stones as My images. Abandoning Me, the God, who dwells in every one, the deluded devotee who worships stocks and stones, his worship is wasted as the clarified butter is wasted when sacrificed in the ashes (of sacrificial fire)."

"If you desire to worship me truly, then look at every one with an equal eye, look at every one with the eye of a friend; give unto Life, reverence Life; My dwelling place is the heart of every creature."²

"The body is a temple in which dwells none else but God."³

"O God; thou dwellest in diverse forms in diverse bodies ;

1. *Pātañjaladarśana*, I-1-33. 2. *Bhāgavata*, III-29-21, 22, 27.

3. *Maitreyopaniṣad*, II-1.

in some as woman, in others as man, in some as youth, in others as maiden ; while in some others as a decrepit, tottering old man, wandering about with the aid of a staff. In the entire universe, in every direction, it is thou that hast come into being."

"It is the selfsame God Who has manifested Himself as father, as well as son ; as an elder, as well as a youngster. It is He Who has entered the heart and mind. The same Being Who was born at the beginning of creation, also exists now in the embryo."¹

The Buddhist scriptures also assert the same truth : "Ill-will for any living creatures cancels out one's good actions,—such as charity, worship of the Buddhas, etc., accumulated in the course of many aeons."²

"Worship of the incomparable leaders, the Buddhas, even if it is immeasurable and performed in various ways, in myriads of worlds, is not equal to a heart full of Universal Love."³

"Verily the Buddhas and the Bodhisatvas are seen here in the form of living creatures. How could one then disregard them ?"

"Just as even by fulfilling all desires, one cannot give any happiness to him whose body is all ablaze, likewise the compassionate Buddhas cannot be propitiated by any means, if any suffering is caused to living creatures."⁴

"Having meditated for aeons, the Buddhas have realized this to be the only blessing, because in this (Discipline) there is happiness from the very beginning ; and one need not go through any suffering in order to attain happiness. This is the only blessing, because multiplying itself it benefits the whole universe."

"They should never abandon the *bodhicitta* (aspiring to enlightenment for the sake of the deliverance of all living creatures) who desire liberation from the immeasurable sufferings

1. *Atharva*, X-8-27,28. 2. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, VI-1. 3. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, p. 157. 4. *Ibid*, p. 156.

of life, who desire to alleviate the miseries of all creatures, who desire to enjoy infinite bliss.”

“All other good actions, like the plantain tree, bear fruit only once and then decay ; but the tree of *bodhicitta* ever bears fruit and never decays.”

“May I become Buddha for the deliverance of the whole universe,—this very prayer (aspiration) alone surpasses the worship of the Buddhas, what is there then to be wondered at, if removing all the sufferings of all the creatures, the effort to give them every (kind of) happiness results in immeasurable merit ?”¹

According to the Buddhist, *maitri* means to consider the whole universe like one’s only son.

“As a mother protects her only son even at the risk of her own life, in the same way one should enlarge his heart infinitely in compassion for all living creatures.”²

“May I be a medicine to the sick, their physician ; may I continue to attend on them until they are healed and made whole.”

“May I be an inexhaustible store for the poor ; may I attend on them in the form of a fulfilment of their manifold desires.”

“May I be a helper to the helpless, a guide to the way-farer, a boat, a bridge, a dam to those who desire to cross over to the other shore.”

“May I be a lamp to those who need a light ; may I be a bed to those who need a bed ; may I be a servant to those who need a servant.”

“For the fulfilment of the needs of all the creatures (may) I surrender dispassionately my being in all my manifold existences, all my objects of enjoyments, all the merit accumulated by me in the past and in the present and that which I may acquire in the future.”

“To attain liberation (*nirvāṇa*—lit. extinction of all

attachment) one must abandon every thing. I long to attain liberation. Therefore I have to give up every thing. Then it is better to surrender it to all creatures."

"This body of mine is for the satisfaction of whatever pleasure they (creatures) desire ; let them hurt it, censure it, soil it with dust."

"May I thus become an object of their various enjoyments to the countless creatures of the countless worlds in the universe, until all of them have attained to liberation."

"May all those attain to Buddhahood who would soil my fair name with falsehood, who would cause injuries to my body and mind, who would scoff at me. May others also attain to Buddhahood."¹

"May all those who are tyrannized over, who are suffering from bondage, who are steeped in manifold misfortunes, who are overcome by a thousand and one ills, who are overwhelmed with horrors of diverse kinds and dreadful woes, be set free from tyranny, bondage, misfortune, ills and woe. May all the condemned have life ; may those who are woe-begone be fearless.

"May those who are hungry have food of various kinds. May those who are thirsty have drink of various kinds.

"May the blind see the variegated world. May the deaf hear the pleasing sounds.

"May the naked be clothed, may the poor have riches.

"Obtaining heaps of beautiful gems, wealth and grain, may all be happy. May none ever taste suffering.

"May all abandon sin, acquire merit and act benevolently."²

We shall now discuss here how the Bodhisattvas conquered anger and ill-will and practised forgiveness in order to advance on the path of Universal Love.

"Let us not be angry with the evil-doer. And if we have to be angry, then we should be angry first with the gall and other humours in the body ; because it is these which, being excited,

1. *Bodhi*, III-7, 9, 17, 18, 10, 11, 12, 21, 16. 2. *Śikṣā*, p. 217-218.

produce diseases of diverse kinds and cause us manifold sufferings. And yet we are never angry with them, for they are not conscious and are themselves dependent on factors (beyond their control).

“They have not the capacity to get angry consciously and independently. It is these factors and conditions which force them to get excited. The same arguments apply also to conscious creatures. It is therefore not true that they do us harm or cause sufferings by becoming angry deliberately, consciously and independently. Their anger or ill-will is occasioned by their moral condition, i.e. by evil inherent in their previous actions, which therefore are the true foundation of their anger or ill-will.”

“Thus conscious and non-conscious beings are both equally dependent. For example, colic pain is caused independent of whether the gall and other humours will it so or not. Likewise, whether the conscious creatures will it or not, their anger flames forth forcibly.”¹

“Just as the non-conscious humours are not excited by any conscious volition on their part, in the same way conscious creatures, too, never think deliberately beforehand, ‘now I shall be angry’, before they burst forth into anger. And anger (in its turn) is also not self-created by any such previous volition or thought, as ‘I shall now be born.’”

“All kinds of faults and all kinds of evil actions are produced by their respective causes and conditions ; for none is independent, all of them being dependent.”

“These causes and conditions, too, have no such conscious volitions or thought, ‘we shall now cause it.’ The thing which is produced, that too has no such consciousness that ‘I am being produced or have been produced by this or that.’”²

“In this way everything in this world is dependent on some other thing and that too on which it depends is also not indepen-

1. *Bodhi*, VI-22, 23. 2. *Ibid*, VI-24, 25, 26.

dent. Everything is worked like a marionette, pulled by something else. With whom then to get angry ?”

“Do not allow the calm of your mind to be ruffled when you see either a friend or a foe acting unjustly ; remain content, thinking that they are compelled by some evil-provoking cause or conditions to act in that particular way. They are thus dependent on others. Why then blame them ?”¹

“A person maddened by anger hurts himself by pricking his own body with thorns ; giving up food he starves himself. Others put an end to their life either by hanging themselves with a rope, or throwing themselves from a precipice, or by drinking poison, etc. Could they ever act in this way if they were independent and not dependent (on some other force or agency) ? Every one desires his own happiness ; who ever desires sufferings ? If the unfortunate creature who is under the sway of lust, anger, etc., hurts himself in this way, how can you expect that he would not hurt another.”²

“Just as we do not get angry but rather pity a person who is possessed (by some evil spirit) even when he acts in various harmful ways, in the same way, why should we not pity instead of getting angry with those who, possessed by the evil spirit of lust, anger, etc., commit suicide physically, as mentioned above, or spiritually by doing harm to others ?”

“It is the nature of fire to burn : everyone knows it very well. Therefore, when burnt by fire we do not get angry with it. Likewise, if we assume that it is the nature of an ignorant person to do harm to others, then we should not get angry with him, too, for he also acts according to his own nature.”³

“When some one strikes me with a stick or something else, I do not get angry with the stick but with him who wields it. Therefore when a person, ‘wielded’ by ill-will, strikes me, I should get angry with the ill-will and not with him.”

“The weapon with which I am struck and the body where

1. *Ibid*, VI-31, 33. 2. *Ibid*, VI-35, 36, 37. 3. *Ibid*, VI-38,39.

I am struck, both are the cause of suffering; with whom shall I get angry, the weapon-wielding foe or with myself who wields a body ?”

“The body is like a festering boil which feels pain easily (or quickly). Yet blinded by attachment, I have accepted that same body. Then when I feel the pain, with whom shall I get angry ?”

“I do not desire suffering (caused by some weapon), yet I desire the body, which is the cause of that suffering. Verily I am a fool. I am the main culprit. Why do I then get angry with others (who are only abettors or accomplices in the crime) ?”¹

“I acquire the virtue of forgiveness through the instrumentality of the person whom I think an evil-doer. This cancels out the demerits of the past. On the other hand, through my instrumentality is born in the evil-doer, violence, ill-will, etc., which drag him down to the hell of continuous and unbearable suffering. It is obvious, therefore, that he who seems to me to do me evil, is in reality my benefactor, and it is I who do him evil. O wicked mind, why, then, drawing contrary conclusions, dost thou get angry ?”²

“It is not meet for me to despise those who outrage or destroy the images, the relics, and the Good Law (of the Buddha); for these do not hurt at all the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.”³

“Of what avail to man is praise, fame or honour ? These do not confer any merit on him, they do not even prolong his life or add to his strength ; neither do they cure disease, nor do they give any physical pleasure.”

“Praise or honour does not conduce to my welfare. On the contrary, they destroy it ; they produce in my mind envy of the meritorious. ‘My merit surpasses every one else’s,’ ‘I alone should get all the wealth’ : creating such a state of mind, they (praise, honour, etc.) give rise to envy of, and anger at, the wealth of others.”⁴

1. *Ibid*, VI-41,43,44,45. 2. *Ibid*, VI-48,49. 3. *Ibid*, VI-64. 4. *Ibid*, VI-90, 98.

"I desire liberation. The fetters of gain, praise or honour do not become me. How strange it is then that I have ill-will against those who (help me to) file away those fetters !"

"They bar the door against me when I desire to enter sufferings. They are as if made to act by the grace of the Buddha. How could I then ever have ill-will against such benefactors of mine ?"¹

"Even when my meritorious act is obstructed by some one, then also I have no justification for getting angry with him ; for there is no greater virtue than forgiveness, and it is only due to him that I have an opportunity to exercise this virtue."

"If I am intolerant and do not forgive him, then the obstruction in my meritorious act is caused only by myself. Even when there was an opportunity of acquiring merit, I did not acquire it."²

"This fruit of forgiveness is acquired by his and my co-operation. He should therefore be the first to share it, for he is the primary cause of, and principal helper in, my earning it (the above-mentioned merit)."

"If one were to say that my enemy (the evil-doer) had no such intention of helping me to achieve merit through forgiveness, and so, even though he may be the cause of my acquiring the merit, he is not worthy of honour, then may I ask him why he worships the Good Law which is the cause of his acquiring merit, seeing that it also is void of intention ?"

"My forgiveness is evoked precisely because he has the evil intention. Therefore, he is the cause of my forgiveness. Like the Good Law, then, he is also to be honoured."³

The sorrow of the whole world will have to be shouldered by him, his *all* will have to be surrendered, even his own life. Those who do not desire, thinking all of this, to advance on the path of *maitri*, to them says the Bodhisattva :

"To remove a greater suffering we all accept a lesser suffering ; e. g., to pluck out a thorn from any part of the body,

1. *Ibid.*, VI-100, 101. 2. *Ibid.*, VI-102,103. 3. *Ibid.*, VI-108,109,111.

causes suffering, yet we accept it quite willingly, because we know that this suffering is much less than the greater suffering caused by the thorn, and that the former can do away with the latter.”¹

“The suffering experienced on the path of *maitri* which results in the acquisition of *bodhi* is like the suffering caused while plucking out the thorn.”²

It is true that one has to accept great suffering while treading the path of *maitri*, such as sacrifice of one’s own life, nay, of his limbs, one by one ; but it is also true that the result of such suffering will be enlightenment (*bodhi*) which is desired by every one.

“It is not unjustified to cause some pain to a patient while treating him. But the greatest physician who cures all diseases, the compassionate Buddha, does not in the initial stage of the treatment cause any pain to His patient. He treats His patient with soothing sweetness.”³

“In the beginning He makes the pilgrim on the path of *maitri* give up things as worthless as a straw ; gradually and slowly He habituates him into giving up things which are comparatively a little more valuable and a little larger in quantity. In this way the pilgrim gradually reaches a stage when he gladly and effortlessly sacrifices even his own blood and bones.”

“When this practice of giving reaches its highest peak, when one considers one’s own flesh as worthless as a straw, then is it at all difficult to give up one’s blood and bones ?”⁴

But is there really any pain on the path of *maitri* ?

“For the treader of the path there is neither physical nor mental pain. As the giving up of evil-doing results in cessation of his physical pain, so the acquisition of wisdom leads to cessation of his mental pain ; the compassionate one who through the acquisition of merit and wisdom is happy both physically and

1. *Ibid*, VII-20. 2. *Ibid*, VII-22. 3. *Ibid*, VII-24. 4. *Ibid*, VII-25, 26.

mentally and who devotes himself to the well-being of others, is there then any suffering which can cause him pain ?”¹

“Who can ever feel despondent when, seated in the fatigue-saving chariot of *bodhicitta*, he treads his way through bliss after bliss !”²

“As happiness is dear to me, so it is to others. So where then is the difference between them and me so that I try to obtain my own happiness ?”

“As fear and sufferings are distasteful to me, so are they to others ; so where then is the difference between them and me, so that I do not protect others (against fear and sufferings) ?”³

“It may be argued that one’s suffering is increased when there is compassion in his heart ; (for) then he feels the sufferings of others as if they were his own. Therefore it is clear that it is compassion which multiplies sufferings. So it is better not to cultivate compassion.

“To this question the answer is, that there is no end to suffering in this world ; and if you could visualize the manifold infinite suffering of this world, you could realize then, that compared with that, the suffering created by compassion (in your heart) is not really great.”⁴

“Besides it stands to reason that if individual suffering can remove the suffering of many, then let the individual suffering be caused. The compassionate one, therefore, should (try to) create such suffering in his own heart as well as in the hearts of others.”

“The Bodhisattva Supuṣpacandra, knowing for certain that by going to the king he would have to put his own life into danger, yet he accepted the suffering thus caused, in order to remove the suffering of many others. He did not try to spare himself the suffering at the cost of the sufferings of many others.”⁵

1. *Ibid*, VII-28. 2. *Ibid*, VII-30. 3. *Ibid*, VIII-95, 96. *Śikṣā*, Ch. 1. p. 2. 4. *Bodhi*, VIII-104. *Śikṣā*, p. 360. 5. *Bodhi*, VIII-105, 106.

The story runs thus : There was a king by name Śūradatta. He had his capital

Those who are merciful and who suffer for others, do not at all look upon it as suffering, even though the latter may be infinite. It becomes natural and easy for them to sacrifice for the sake of others, their happiness, their all, their very life. They are ready to surrender heaven and even liberation in order to remove the pain of the sufferer.

"May I thus be an object of their various enjoyments to the countless creatures of the countless worlds in the universe, until all of them have attained liberation."¹

"I shall stay behind in this world till the very end of it, in order to remove the suffering of even one individual."²

From where do they, the treaders on the path of *maitri*, derive all this strength? Where is the fountain-spring of their incomparable strength? What is that wealth, possessing which they reject even the wealth of liberation as trash? They themselves have unravelled this mystery.

"All-sufficing unto them is the contentment, the peace, the endless and ever-flowing joy which they experience when, through this kind of their incomparable service, they see the sufferers set free step by step from the bondage of pain. Of what avail to them, then, is dry-as-dust liberation?"³

The nectar of this joy of serving all the creatures of the world does away at once with hunger, thirst, exertion,

at Ratnāvati. His subjects were given to evil ways. For their uplift therefore many Bodhisattvas were born in his kingdom. The king, however, banished all of them from his territory. These exiled Bodhisattvas then began to reside in a forest named *Samantabhadra*. Among them there was one Supuṣpacandra. Intensely pained at the evil ways of the people, he resolved to lead them to the path of Good. He told the others about his resolution. But they all tried to dissuade him from going back to the people and thus putting his own life in danger. He too knew the dangers, attending on his mission. Notwithstanding, he left the forest to preach the Good Law, and in due course he arrived at Ratnāvati, where he succeeded in bringing a large number of people to the path of Good. The royal priest and even the princes accepted his teaching. Seeing that the people were attracted to him in such large numbers, the king, in anger and envy, ordered that Supuṣpacandra be killed. The executioner, in accordance with the king's order, then hacked his body, limb by limb, and plucked his eyes with a pair of tongs; in the end his body was thrown on the high road.

1. *Ibid*, III-21. 2. *Śikṣā*, p. 14. 3. *Bodhi*, VIII-108; *Śikṣā*, p. 360.

fatigue, despondency and perplexity. Rantideva who was emaciated on account of his forty-eight-day fast, when his body was quaking with hunger and thirst, when his sight had become blurred and when he was gasping for life, surrendered the drinking water given to him, to another thirsty person ; and tasting the nectar of this joy, exclaimed:

"My hunger, my thirst, my fatigue, and penury, all are now at an end ; by offering the water given to me, to one who longed for life, the shaking of my body, weariness, despondency, perplexity, and sorrow, all have at once vanished.

"I do not desire the highest state which is endowed with supernatural powers ; nor do I desire liberation. I desire to take on the suffering, the penury, and misery of others. I shall stay behind until the last creature of the universe attains to liberation. I desire to be born again and again in the universe, and again and again in this way, willingly taking on the suffering of all the creatures, make them happy."¹

(*Translated from the original Bengali by Sj. Gurdial Mullik.*)

1. *Bhāgavata*, IX-21, 13, 12.

King Rantideva who enjoyed great prosperity, was reduced to poverty, because he gave away in charity all his wealth to the hungry, the poor and the needy, so much so that in the end he was hard put to it even for food for himself. He along with his kith and kin then was forced to fast. For forty-eight days they had no food or water. On the forty-ninth day, in the morning, they got some cakes prepared with milk and clarified butter. Just when Rantideva with his hungry kinsmen was about to eat these, there appeared on the scene a Brahmin guest. The king who saw God in every creature, extended his hospitality to him, fed him on some of those cakes. The Brahmin then went away. Rantideva then thought of sharing the remaining cakes with his kinsfolk. Just then there came a Śūdra (a member of the menial class) asking for food. The king therefore fed him on a portion of what was left. The Śūdra then went away. Then came a Candāl (an untouchable) together with his dogs, and begged for food for himself and his companions. Rantideva then gave them all that was left over and bowed to them all respectfully. Now only some water was left for Rantideva and his kinsmen. But as soon as they thought of drinking it, a Pukkasa (lower than Candāl, in caste) came there and said to the king Rantideva ; "O king, give water to this impure one." Hearing his piteous appeal and seeing that he was very much fatigued, the king gave him the remaining water and uttered the immortal words mentioned above.



BAPUJI
12.4.1930



MAHATMA GANDHI

GANDHIJI ON INDUSTRIALISM & MACHINERY

Nirmal Kumar Bose

MANY of us have very vague ideas about Gandhiji's opinions regarding different matters. Thus, for example, some believe that he is against all machinery and all forms of modern civilization.¹ Others again hold that he is willing to use machinery to the extent it is consistent with human welfare, i. e. for purposes of lightening the load of all men on earth. And each can quote passages in order to support his own view.

But this procedure is entirely unscientific. For a scientific study of Gandhiji's opinions, or, for that matter, of any other man's opinions, we should arrange the utterances in chronological order, and then try to understand each in relation to the circumstances under which it was written. Thus, a sermon on bodily labour addressed to those who habitually shirk it, should not be taken as a general advice given to all mankind. It would be out of place among a group of people composed of those who sweat from morning till night for their daily bread and yet have not enough to live a decent life. Each utterance of Gandhiji should therefore be viewed in its proper context ; and then only we shall be able to find out how his ideas and opinions on a particular subject have changed in course of time, if they have changed at all. Sometimes we may even find that only the connotation of certain terms have changed for him, while his fundamental opinions have remained substantially unaltered.

Let us, therefore, proceed to do so with regard to the question of industrialism and machinery.

In 1908, while in South Africa, Gandhiji published a small

¹ Mr. M. Sen in his *Outlines of Economics*, Part I (Tenth Edition Revised, 1969), quotes a passage in the footnote to p. 287 to support this view. Unfortunately the passage chosen is from a book entitled *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, (not the *Young India*) which was published as early as 1908. Gandhiji modified his ideas on machinery about 1924-27, but his later utterances have not been referred to.

book in Gujrati, which was later on translated into English under the title, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. That book contained a severe condemnation of what was termed "modern civilization". In trying to explain his point, Gandhiji discussed the influence of railways and of machine-made goods upon Indian life and came to the conclusion that they were wholly evil. His argument was :

"Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization, it represents a great sin.

"The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking. When there were no mills, these women were not starving. If the machinery craze grows in our country it will become an unhappy land. It may be considered a heresy, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and to use flimsy Manchester cloth, than to multiply mills in India. By using Manchester cloth, we would only waste our money, but by reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses. And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men. . . . I fear we will have to admit that moneyed men support British rule ; their interest is bound up with its stability Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for any India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom It is machinery that has impoverished India. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery" (Chapter XIX).

In the above book, therefore, Gandhiji levelled a general charge against machinery as it was the symbol of the enslavement of human beings. Evidently his charge was not against machinery as such but in so far as it was the cause of human degradation. It is very important to remember this last point. For Gandhiji does not appear to have departed from this position

even now, although the meaning of the term "machinery" has undergone some amount of modification for him. In 1908, the term evidently meant for him something more than machinery itself, for he included in it the industrial system which went along with the use of power-driven mills in India at that time. The distinction between industrialism and machinery had not yet been drawn by him. As a matter of fact, his knowledge or experience of machines was very limited.

It is interesting to remember that later on Gandhiji wrote about his ignorance of machines during this period in the following terms:

"I do not remember to have seen a handloom or a spinning wheel till the year 1908, when in *Hind Swaraj* I described it as the panacea for the growing pauperism of India Even in 1915, when I returned to India from South Africa, I had not actually seen a spinning wheel. When the Satyagraha Ashram was founded at Sabarmati, we introduced a few hand-looms there. But no sooner had we done this, than we found ourselves up against a difficulty. All of us belonged either to the liberal professions or to business ; not one of us was an artisan."¹

Gandhiji's ideas regarding economic problems seem to have taken a more concrete and realistic shape during the Non-cooperation Movement of 1919-20. He became more specific with regard to his ideals of production and distribution. He began to say:

"Multiplication of mills cannot solve the problem. They can only cause concentration of money and labour and thus make confusion worse confounded" (10.12.19).²

"We want to organise our national power not by adopting the best methods of production only but by the best methods of *both* the production and the distribution" (28.7.20).

1. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, 1222, Vol. II, p. 555-6.

2. Where only dates are given the reference is to the *Young India* of that date.

“What India needs is not the concentration of capital in a few hands, but its distribution so as to be within easy reach of the $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of villages that make this continent” (23. 3. 21).

His utterances on Khadi made about this date, as well as on subsequent occasions, as the following quotations will show, lay stress upon the same theme, viz. that distribution on an equal or equitable basis should be organized along with production. Mills and machinery were bad because they tended to concentrate wealth in some hands, and leave the rest without the wherewithal to feed or clothe themselves. This charge was thus not against machinery as such, but against the economic system which was responsible for its introduction and expansion. He had thus not departed in 1921 from the position of 1908.

“Our mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they will not keep down the prices unless they were compelled. They are frankly money-makers and will not therefore regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-spinning is therefore designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilise the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning” (16. 2. 21).

“I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. I have suggested hand-spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible. The spinning wheel itself is a piece of valuable machinery, and in my own humble way I have tried to secure improvements in it in keeping with the special conditions of India.”

The last is a very significant statement. For here we first find him drawing a line between machinery of one kind and another. The Charkha, his *Kamdhenu*, his *jam-i-jam*, revealed to him for the first time, perhaps, that machinery as such was not bad ; it could be used lawfully as well as unlawfully ; for human good as well as for human exploitation. This became

increasingly clear to him between 1925 and 1927. He started saying :

“That use of machinery is lawful which subserves the interests of all” (15. 4. 26).

He came to recognise that,

“Machinery has its place : it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but, I know that it is criminal to displace hand-labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes” (5. 11. 25).

He described the Non-co-operation Movement as

“An attempt to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or the humane spirit among the men behind the machinery. Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men *in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race.*¹ Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries but on the contrary they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans under my scheme seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill” (17. 9. 25).

“Khaddar does not seek to destroy all machinery but it does regulate its use and check its weedy growth. It uses machinery for the service of the poorest in their own cottages. The wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery” (17. 3. 27).

1. Italics ours.

His idea regarding machinery thus showed some amount of change. In 1908, machines were for him a symbol of industrialism, which was bad because it led to human degeneration. But now the same love for mankind, the desire to lighten human labour, led him to distinguish between machinery and machinery. And his own economic programme of khadi was really intended to restore machinery to what he now began to call "its proper state" in the scheme of human life. His idea regarding large-scale machinery was bound to be affected thereby. And we find proof of that in an utterance of 24. 2. 27.

"Do I seek to destroy the mill industry, I have often been asked. If I did I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill industry to prosper—only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. On the contrary if the interests of the country demand that the industry should go, I should let it go without the slightest compunction."

But at the same time as Gandhiji was drawing nearer to machinery in its capacity of lightening the burden of human toil, his condemnation of the industrial system gained in emphasis. We find it clothed in severer language from 1926 to 1931 than in the earlier period of 1908-19. On 7.10.26, he wrote:

"The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock-carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change, however revolutionary, can do us any good."

"Indeed, the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is *all* evil. Let us not be deceived by catch-words and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships and telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have

learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is therefore to destroy industrialism at any cost" (7.10.26).

"Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialisation. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must do if it becomes industrialised—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrialising India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?" (12.11.31).

"What is the cause of the present chaos? It is exploitation, I will not say of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know" (22.10.31).

Gandhiji had thus changed from his attitude of 1908, when machinery was for him a symbol of the evil "modern civilization." He now narrowed down his charge, which became industrialism, i. e. centralized forms of production with profit as the motive. Machinery was absolved, in his mind, of part of its former blame and became "a wooden thing". Part of machinery could legitimately be used for human welfare.

" 'Are you against all machinery ?'

" 'My answer is emphatically, No. But, I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of millions of cottages I should welcome' " (17.6.26).

"What I object to, is the *craze* for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour', till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might" (13.11.24).

" 'Then you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today ?'

" 'I would unhesitatingly say, Yes; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but its limitation.'

" 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'

" 'It might have to go, but I must make one thing clear. The

supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.'

" 'But in that case there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

" 'Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration of the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease, and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed, the motive. Replace greed by love and everything will come right' " (13. 11. 24).

It was his belief that,

"If India takes to khaddar and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and for labour saving purposes" (24. 7. 24).

The writings of 1924 thus marked another point of departure in this scheme of things. With his touch-stone of human welfare, he had already learnt to draw a line between machinery and industrialism. Now he seems to have recognised that all forms of industrial organization were not necessarily wrong. In certain cases, the centralized use of machinery might be unavoidable if the object was the lightening of human labour. When it was so, he would not object to it if it was conducted under ideal conditions and under full social control. In other words, industrial organization itself was now losing some of its former sting for him, and he was prepared to use it under certain conditions. He carried the same idea in 1937, and evidently carries it even today.

“ ‘You are against the machine age, I see.’ ”

“ ‘To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us.’ ”

“ ‘You would not industrialize India ?’ ”

“ ‘I would, indeed, in my sense of the term. The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities and their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.’ ”

“ ‘You would then go back to the natural economy ?’ ”

“ ‘Yes. Otherwise I should go back to the city. I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For I should have no share in the spoliation of the nation that is going on from day to day. But I am industrializing the village in a different way’ ” (*Harijan*, 27. 2. 37).

“ ‘The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villages as the problems

of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others" (*Harijan*, 29. 8. 36).

We thus come to the conclusion that formerly Gandhiji was against all machinery, in so far as it was a symbol of "modern civilization." The latter was bad, not because it was modern, but because it was demonstrably responsible for the impoverishment and degradation of human beings. Later on, with his increasing experience of the spinning wheel, he drew a line between machinery designed for human good and that designed for human exploitation. On the whole, he found that centralized power-machinery was more readily capable of being used for purposes of exploitation than decentralized machinery.

The supreme consideration for him has always been the welfare of the individual ; and he has subjected all things to this supreme test. Just as his insistence upon human welfare led him to absolve machinery itself from part of its blame, so now he began to find that even certain forms of centralized industrial organization could be turned to human good. But these had then to be under full social control and operated only under ideal conditions.

Thus Gandhiji has drawn nearer and nearer to the socialist point of view regarding machinery in practice, although he has kept himself remarkably independent in theory. At bottom, he prefers the village to the city ; and would have as much of machinery as the villages can profitably absorb. He would like India to be a land of self-contained villages and no cities. If cities are proved to be inevitable for human welfare, he would vote for them but still look upon them as a necessary evil. It is here that he differs most from the champions of industrialization. Lately he has written :

“Remember that your non-violence cannot operate effectively unless you have faith in the spinning wheel. I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj* with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have therefore to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel” (*Harijan*, 4.11.39).

LARGE SCALE AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES *

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

I AM personally a believer in the development of large scale industries. Nevertheless I have wholeheartedly supported the khadi movement as well as the wider village industries movement for political, social and economic reasons. In my mind there is no essential conflict between the two, although there might occasionally be conflict in regard to certain aspects or developments of both. In this matter I do not represent Gandhiji's viewpoint to any large extent, but in practice so far there has not been any marked conflict between the two view-points.

It seems to me obvious that certain key and vital industries, defence industries, and public utilities must be on a large scale. There are certain others which may be on a large scale or a small scale or on a cottage scale. A difference of opinion might arise in regard to the latter. Behind that difference there is a difference of outlook and philosophy and, as I understood Mr. Kumarappa¹, he laid stress on this difference of outlook. His point was that the modern large scale capitalist system ignored the problem of distribution and was based on violence. With this I entirely agree. His solution was that with the development of cottage industries there was a much fairer distribution and the element of violence was much less. I agree with that, too, but it does not go far enough. Violence and monopoly and concentration of wealth in a few hands are produced by the present economic structure. It is not large scale industry that brings any injustice and violence but the misuse of large scale industry by private capitalists and financiers. It is true that the big machine multiplies the power of man exceedingly both for construction and destruc-

* We are grateful to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for allowing these extracts from his letter to the Editor to be published as an article in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.—*Ed.*

1 The reference is to certain discussions in the Planning Committee.—*Ed.*

tion, both for good or for ill. It is possible, I think, to eliminate the evil use and the violence of the big machine by changing the economic structure of capitalism. It is essentially private ownership and the acquisitive form of society that encourage a competitive violence. Under a socialist society this evil should go, at the same time leaving us the good which the big machine has brought.

It is true, I think, that there are certain inherent dangers in big industry and the big machine. There is a tendency to concentrate power and I am not quite sure that this can be wholly eliminated. But I cannot conceive of the world or of any progressive country doing away with the big machine. Even if this was possible, this would result in lowering production tremendously and in thus reducing standards of life greatly. For a country to try to do away with industrialization would lead to that country falling a prey, economically and otherwise, to other more industrialized countries, which would exploit it. For the development of cottage industries on a widespread scale, it is obvious that political and economic power is necessary. It is unlikely that a country entirely devoted to cottage industries will ever get this political or economic power, and so in effect it will not even be able to push cottage industries as it wants to.

I feel, therefore, that it is inevitable and desirable to encourage the use and development of the big machine and thus to industrialise India. I am convinced at the same time that no amount of industrialization in this way will do away with the necessity of developing cottage industries on a large scale in India, and this not merely as feeders but as independent units. I do not know what science may achieve in the course of the next generation or two, but, as far as I can see, cottage industries will be essential for India in addition to large scale industries, which should be encouraged in every way. The problem, therefore, becomes one of co-ordination between the two. It is a question of planning by the State. It cannot be successfully tackled under the present anarchic capitalist system.

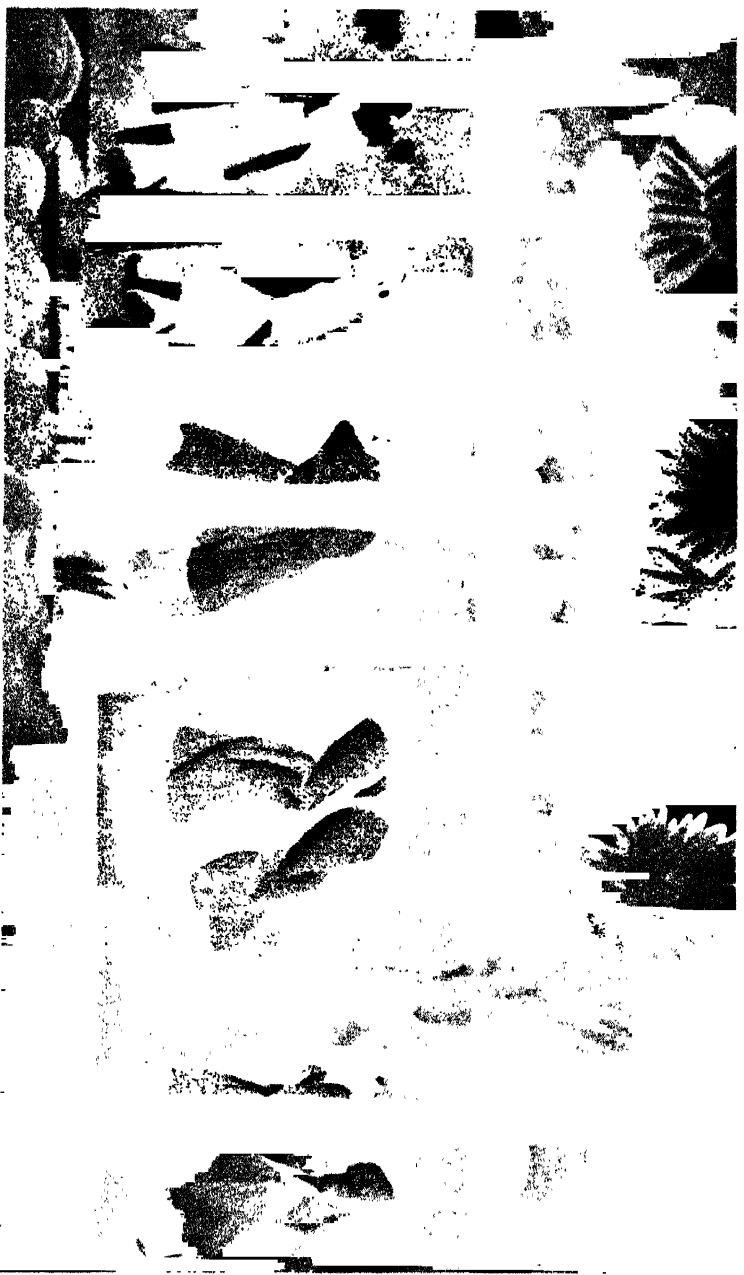
I have tried to explain briefly my own views on this subject. I cannot presume to interpret any one else's views. But I do feel that it is easily possible for me to co-operate fully with the advocates of cottage industries, even though I might not accept their fundamental outlook.

Unfortunately we are not dealing with a socialist State at present but are passing through a transition stage when the capitalist system is cracking up. This gives rise to innumerable difficulties. In any event it is clear that the principles to be applied even today should be those laid down by the Congress, that is, the State should own or control key industries and services, transport, etc. If the term "key industries" is held to include all vital industries, we get a large degree of socialisation. I would add further, as a necessary corollary to our policy, that where there is any conflict between a privately owned large scale industry and cottage industry, the State should own or control that large scale industry. The State would then have the power and liberty to adopt any policy which it lays down and it can co-ordinate the two.

With considerable experience of Congress policies during the last 20 years, I can say with confidence that they have been of great economic and social advantage to India. It is perfectly true that the Congress proceeded on the assumption that large scale industries were strong enough to look after themselves and therefore more attention should be given to cottage industries. This must be considered in a proper context. We were a non-official organization and the economic structure of the State was entirely outside our control. Encouraging large scale industries under these circumstances meant encouraging private vested interests, often foreign vested interests. Our objective was not only to increase production by utilising the wasted man power of India as well as the wasted time of large number of people, but also to create self-reliance among the masses of India. The Congress achieved a great measure of success in this.

This subject cannot be considered in the air as a matter of

pure theory but must be related to the circumstances and the facts of life as they exist in a country. We can never ignore the human factors. In China to-day there is no particular bent towards cottage industries. But circumstances have forced the Chinese to develop their village industries and co-operatives with extraordinary rapidity. There was the greatest interest in China in our village industries movement and I was asked to send some of our experts in these to China. It is possible that some Chinese experts may come to India to study our village industries methods.



PALM GROVE

By Nandlal Bose

ON THE ORIGIN OF CASTE IN INDIA *

Pandit Kshitimohan Sen

WE all have some idea as to what caste is. The real difficulty comes in when we are asked to put the idea in definite terms. Indologists of Europe have tried to do so, but not with much success so far. On the whole, our observation shows that caste is determined by birth and that inter-caste marriage is prohibited. Until now caste-rules were also rigid on the point of inter-dining and social intercourse.

In between the highest and the lowest caste there are any number of strata. *Ācharaniya* or socially more favoured classes of people are those from whom the Brahmins and other higher *Varnas* might accept water. Those who are permitted to offer preparations cooked with *ghee* and sweets to the higher castes are in an even better position in the social hierarchy. In passing, mention might be made of the fact that outside their own caste and class the Brahmins do not receive any other kind of cooked food.

Untouchability of a virulent nature is met with in the south of India. There those castes alone are *ācharaniya* whose touch does not defile the Brahmin and who can offer drinking water to him. In the same way the more favoured ones, proportionately speaking, are those who are regarded as *touchable* by Brahmin women and especially Brahmin widows.

It follows, therefore, that the untouchable classes are those who are non-*ācharaniya*, and whose touch leads to defilement. Over and above this, there are also degrees in untouchability. Among the non-*ācharaniyas*, the lowest are those whose mere entry in a village or township suffices to defile the whole place. Then there are those whose presence within the precincts

* Translated from the original Bengali by S. Kshitish Roy.—*Ed.*

pollutes the temple itself, whose touch renders metal utensils and earthenware pots fit only for the dung-heap. Mr. Sridhar Ketkar in his learned work, *The History of Caste in India*, has given a detailed and interesting account.

Nowadays ideas on the inviolability of the system of caste have undergone considerable change. Those who have the good fortune of being born in higher caste families prefer usually not to be unduly punctilious. In the same way, those who do not belong to the higher strata no longer agree to accept their position as the lowest and the lowliest. Nevertheless many members of the higher *Varnas* up till this day regard the caste-divisions as appropriate and calculated to augment social welfare. Mahatma Gandhi, though he leads a crusade against untouchability, the removal of which occupies a prominent place in his political programme, is one of the supporters of the institution of *Varnas* (*Varnasrama*). Mrs. Luxmi Narsu in her book, *A Study of Caste*, quotes Gandhiji's opinion on the matter. "*Varnasrama* is inherent in human nature," says Mahatmaji, "and Hinduism has reduced it to a science. It does attach by birth. A man cannot change his *Varna* by choice" (p. 131).

It is noticeable, therefore, that a belief in the caste system anticipates a belief in castes being determined by birth. Birth is what distinguishes the Brahmin from the rest. How and when was this distinction made ? Some say that the earliest reference to the caste institution is to be found in the *Rigveda* (*Puruṣa Sukta* X. 90) where, we are told, the Brahmin issued out of the mouth of the *Puruṣa*, Kshatriya from the arm, Vaishya from the thigh, and Sudra from the feet. Others opine that this *Sukta* and the chapter it belongs to must be of later date. For, the reference there is only to the four *Varnas* but not to the numerous divisions and sub-divisions which constitute the system of Caste in India. Very rare are the references to the Brahmin in the *Rigveda* ; and then too the term is used to connote the sage and the priest. The term Kshatriya occurs but rarely, whereas Vaishya and Sudra are mentioned in *Puruṣa Sukta* only.

The theory of the origin of the caste system as delineated in *Puruṣa Sūkta* was not accepted as final or infallible, even in the earlier days. It gave rise to controversies and the opinions differed. According to *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, Sounaka, son of Gritsamada, introduced the system.¹

Harivamśa in the twenty-ninth chapter of the book refers to Sunaka as the son of Gritsamada. Under the name of Sounaka many Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra sons were born to Sunaka.² It is *Harivamśa*, again, which says that once Brahma blest King Bali, son of Shibi, saying that he would establish the four-fold division of caste.³ In the same treatise there is further mention as to the origin of the four *Varnas* : Brahmins from *Akshara*, Kshatriyas from *Kshara*, Vaishyas from *Vikāra*, Sudras from *Dhūma Vikāra* (*Bhaviṣya*, CCXI, 11816). Different *Purāṇas* give divergent stories as to the origin ; a comprehensive list of the views would be superfluous for the purpose of the present article.

In the *Mahābhārata* it is said that in the earliest times there was only one caste ; namely, Brahmin, and one Veda (*Sānti Parva*, CLXXXVIII). Continuing, the author tells us there was originally no sin on earth.⁴

According to this book, caste was determined by physical, mental and spiritual qualities and also by natural inclination.

1 गृत्समदस्य शौनकश्चातुर्वर्ण्यप्रवर्तयिता ऽ भूत् ।

(*Viṣṇupurāṇa*, IV, 8. 9.)

2 पुत्रा गृत्समदस्यापि शुनको यस्य शौनकाः ।

ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रियाश्चैव वैश्याः शूद्रास्तथैव च ॥

(*Harivamśa*, XXIX, 1519-20.)

3 चतुरो नियतान् वर्णान् त्वं च स्थापयितेति ह ।

(*Ibid*, XXI, 1688.)

4 न विशेषोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्ममिदं जगत् ।

ब्राह्मणा पूर्वसृष्टं हि कर्मभिर्वर्णतां गतम् ॥

In the *Gita* Sri Krishna says that he created the four *Varnas* according as there were various people with various aptitudes and attainments.¹ But the *Puranas* and the various dramas in Sanskrit give numerous instances of a Brahmin lowly inclined and a Sudra with a higher nature. To say the least, as we do not find any dearth of Brahmins with Vaishya or Sudra propensities today, so it must have been in olden times. And hence a caste system based only on aptitude and attainment basis was not an easy proposition to accept even in those days. According to the *Sastras* a Brahmin who leads a "dog's life", *Svavrtti*, being in servile professions, serving a non-Hindu Yavana, or living on usury and in such other dubious ways, is lower than a Sudra even and likewise untouchable. Today the most rigid and orthodox persons, championing the cause of caste integrity, are often found to be recruited from such ranks of people who are securely established in *Sastra*-prohibited callings.

Perhaps there was a time when one could say that castes were determined by *Varna*. But the admixture of blood and races is so much in evidence nowadays that the contention has lost much of its force. We no longer associate fair Aryan complexion with Brahmins, nor do we expect every Sudra to be dark. A Bengali proverb makes reference to "dusky Brahmins and fair Sudras." Indeed even in the time of the *Mahabharata* the problem was exactly the same (*Santiparva*, Ch CLXVIII).

The Indian Census Reports go to prove that there is much disparity of feature and complexion among the members of the higher castes in different provinces. Some give indications of a large Dravidian mixture, some of the Scythian, while others of the Mongol and so on (Vide, *Census of India*, Vol. I, p. 489). If cephalic and other ethnological points are taken into consideration, then it will be difficult to find a pure-bred Aryan (*Ibid*, p. 500). Of course, such evidences may admittedly not be final.

Only the other day the Kocha, Tipprah, Garo, Hajong and

other races, who were regarded Non-*acharaniya* for ages together, have laid claims on being Kshatriyas. To a large extent they have succeeded in this attempt simply because of the force of their number and influence and also because times have considerably changed. (*Ibid* p. 520).

In spite of the static character of present-day society we find members of the lower *Varnas* being absorbed into the ranks of many higher castes by sheer force of money and position (*Ibid* Vol. II p. 351).

Many non-Aryan groups among the lower classes, by prohibiting widow-remarriage and "abominable" foods and encouraging untouchability and hatred, have now passed themselves off for members belonging to higher castes (*Ibid* 629). In doing so they have definitely gone down morally as well as physically. Their social structure has been hard hit due to this misdirected enthusiasm for being counted as one of the higher castes.

On the other hand, we discover that changes are not always devoid of better consequences. The Garo, Kocha, Dolu, Hajang etc. have been able to profit socially and in other respects just by reason of their Kshatriya pretensions. The Aryan blood becomes thinner as we proceed further from the Punjab. Heterogenous blood mingles with the Aryan and purity often times becomes a question of false pretences (*Ibid* p. 363). Ironically enough, fanaticism of an aggressive type is encountered more in these regions of mixed races than in those where the purity of Aryan blood retains in a large measure its original character.

History teems with instances of lower caste people laying claims on Kshatriyahood whenever and wherever they have succeeded in wresting royalty. For reasons best known to themselves, the Brahmins have very often supported such claims. Sometimes they have undoubtedly been swayed by motives of gain, whereas in others, especially in the case of Sivaji, the motives have been higher, predominantly political.

Though theoretically speaking we recognise only the four castes or *Varnas*, in fact there seems to be any number of castes and sub-castes, divisions and sub-divisions. A reference to the Census Reports goes to prove the existence of more than three thousand castes. What is even more confusing is a rich variety of surnames indicative of the different divisions. If we take the one instance of the Brahmins, we find that there are among them no less than eight hundred divisions and, in proportion, marriage and other inter-social dealings are impossible between them (Ketkar's *History of Caste*, p. 5.). Bloomfield goes a step further and opines that the Brahmins are a community with two thousand sub-divisions (*Religion of the Veda*, p. 6). The Saraswat Brahmins have 469 sub-sections, Kshatriyas 590, whereas the other two *Varnas* have more than six hundred branches (Lala Baijnath's *Hinduism, Ancient and Modern*, Meerut, 1869, p. 9). The condition is the very same in Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, Gujrat, Maharastra and in South India. In Gujrat there are small communities of Brahmins in some villages, constituted of not more than ten or twelve families, as for instance, Motala Brahmins of the Mota Village.

In spite of what Manu had said about there being four *Varnas* only and no fifth (X. 4.) we discover that contemporary conditions were in flat contradiction of his statements. It is evident he could not help referring to the circumstances. He had tried to explain away the phenomenon by mentioning the different species of the same genus, *i. e.*, caste. In the tenth chapter verses 8 to 39 refer to fifty different castes. The very next verse goes to say that, besides the fifty, there were many more castes. We encounter the names of sixty-two castes as we read up to the forty-fourth verse. Many among them were formed according to ethnic groups, race or tribe, as for instance, Māgadha, Vaideha, Ābhira, Āvantya, Jhalla, Malla, Lichhavi, Khasa, Dravida, Andhra, etc. Apart from these we find mention of those castes whose contact was supposed to have contaminated religious activities. Such were Poundraka, Oudra, Dravida, Kambojo, Yavana, Saka,

Pārada, Pahlava, China, Kirāta, Darada, Khasa etc. Many of these were groups of foreign people who had joined the Aryan ranks.

What is more, it is probable that, though latterly all non-Aryans came to be referred to as Sudras, the Sudras during the Aryan colonization were merely a definite ethnic group. The Bangabasi edition of the *Mahabharata*, published from Calcutta, mentions names of many rivers and lands, tribes and races in the *Bhīsmaparva*, ninth chapter. There, as well as in *Dronaparva* VI. 6., it is seen that the Sudras are mentioned after a reference to the Ābhīras, Vīras, Daradas and Kāshmiras. Even in the *Puranas* Sudras are brought in along with the Bahlikas, Ābhīras and others (*Vāmana Purana*, XIV, 38). Most probably Sudras are those people, who were described by the Greeks as Oxydrace. It may be presumed that all non-Aryans who had accepted Aryan domination and thus found themselves on the same plane of socio-political existence, came to be comprehensively known as Sudras.

The history of the times bears evidence to the genesis of new races and the dying out of old ones. That might explain why many castes referred to in the *Vedas* are not mentioned in the *Smritis* and *vice versa*. It is difficult to imagine what must have happened to these "Vedic" castes. It is quite likely that names might change according to changing times. That is why it is impossible to describe the ever-increasing stream of humanity in terms of the four *Varnas* alone.

As we have already said there are names of certain castes, referred to in the *Smritis*, which we do not come across in the *Vedas*. For instance, the Ugras (Ugra in *Bṛihadaranayaka* is not a caste). Māgadhas, Vaidehas were names according as they came from territories of those names. Chandalas also do not refer to a caste name. Āvirata, Ābhira, Dhigvana, Pukkasa, Kukkutaka, Swapaka, Bena, Bhurja Kantaka, Āvantya, Vātadhana, Puspadha, Shaikha, Jhalla, Malla, Lichhavi, Nata, Karana, Khasa Dravida, Sudhanvāchārya, Kārusha, Vijanma, Maitra, Sāttvata,

Sairindhra, Mārgava, Kārāvara, Meda, Pāndu-Sopāka, Āhindika, Sopāka, Antyabasi, Oudra, Yavana, Shaka, Pahlava, Cheena, Darada, Chunchu, Madgu, Vandī, etc.—these castes are not mentioned in the *Vedas*. Hāndī, Doma, Bāgdi, Bauri, Kāora, etc, well-known castes of Bengal are not even remotely mentioned in the *Vedas* and *Smritis*, Pāṇa and Kandrā of Orissa, Pāsi, Dosād, Muśahar, Kāhār, Kūrmi, Khatik, Turha, etc, of Bihar and north western India, Thia, Cherumā, Pariāh, etc, share the same obscure fate. A reference to census figures shows that thousands of castes current in the present times are not even mentioned in the scriptures.

The authors of the *Puranas* realised this discrepancy and that explains why we come across names of certain castes not mentioned in the olden days. The 105th *śloka* in the tenth chapter, *Brahma khaṇḍa* of the *Brahma Vaivārata Purana*, refers to Hādi and Dom (हड़ी डोमौ). Bāgdi (*ibid*, 118 *śloka*) Jolā and Sharāka are also mentioned. The *Puranas* have followed Manu and other authors of the *Smritis* as regard their treatment of the history of the genesis of the different castes. This has given rise to surprising statements. For instance, “Jolās” originated from a “Mlechha” father and a “Kubinda” mother¹. Again “Jolā” father and “Kubinda” mother produce a Sharāka son.² Kubinda means weaver. Those weavers who embraced Islam were called Jolās. Sharāka is a name derived from that ancient word “Shrāvaka”. A history of the origin of castes based on such findings, it is evident, is without any value whatsoever. However that may be, this chapter of the *Brahma Vaivārta Purana* refers to the origin of such a wide range of castes as Kocha, Jugi, Rajbansi, Kāpālī, Mālākara, Karmakara, Sāṅkhari, Kumāra, Chhutārā, Swarnakāra, Patua, Rajmistri, Teli, Leta, Ganaka, Agradāni, Bede,

1. म्लेच्छात् कुबिन्दकन्यायां जोला जातिर्बभूव ह ॥

Ibid 121

2. जोलात् कुबिन्दकन्यायां शराकः परिकीर्तितः ॥

Again

Baidya, Suta, Bhata, etc. Current researches do not always accept this history as authentic.

It is now clear that many Indian castes have emerged as such from ethnic groups of people who have made inroads into the country from time to time. It is beyond calculation what a vast number of ethnic groups have struggled to establish themselves. Society in India has grown much in the same way as deltas are constituted, with layers of different castes rearing up the structure. Unlike the races in Europe the castes in India have never tried to exterminate one another. They have flourished side by side, busy with their own observances and rites, developing their own different cultures. This has brought in a rich variety of religions and doctrines and also a great number of castes.

The spirit of exclusiveness is a primitive instinct. Here, in India, for obvious reasons each group has attempted to keep up its own individuality with the help of a rigid exclusiveness. This phenomenon must have been a natural expression of the instinct of self-preservation and was certainly a habit which dated back much earlier than the time of the Aryan invasion. It is likely that the Dravidas, in this way, have remained true to their own culture up till this day. The Dravidas, in their turn, might have learnt the art of preserving the institutions, peculiar to themselves, from races who preceded them and set them a similar example. Thus several reasons have combined together to bring about what we call untouchability or exclusiveness. It is not true that untouchability is more pronounced among the higher castes. Among the lower castes it is even more virulent. If a Pulayana is touched by a Pariah he may purify himself after bathing five times over and letting out blood from his finger-tips. A Kurichhan, who himself belongs to a lower caste, coming into contact with other untouchables, has to undergo what may be described as an ordeal in order to go through the process of purification.

Though the Holayas are one of the lowest as a caste, they

regard their household defiled by the mere presence of a Brahmin therein. The Pariahs likewise avoid the touch of a Brahmin. They are some times known to kill a member of the highest class if by inadvertence he enters into Pariah quarters. Kumbhipatiyas of Orissa, who have no scruples on the score of caste distinctions, look upon Brahmins, Rajas, washermen and barbers as untouchables. Likewise there is a number of lower castes who, more or less, do to the Brahmins as they are done by.

At this stage we should consider if this exclusiveness was of Aryan importation. Have the various branches of the Aryans, found all over the world, encouraged this spirit of segregation? If so, to what extent? Is exclusiveness more pronounced in those regions which the Aryans first colonised (the Punjab) or is it more virulent further east and south? Has the spirit of separativeness proportionately increased during the passage of time or has it maintained a *status quo* even from the early days; *i. e.*, the days of the *Rig Veda*? If there is enough evidence to prove that there was no caste distinction as we know it today, or that it existed only in a milder form in the ancient Aryan regions, then, we may be led to believe that exclusiveness was of native origin and not introduced into India by the Aryans.

Ancient Greek, Roman and Teuton histories refer to the existence of oligarchies, but castes, as such, were unknown to them. The case is similar amongst the fire-worshippers of Persia. In the south of India there is a feeling of tension between the higher and lower castes, leading sometimes to bloodshed. The Nambudri Brahmins of Malabar live with Nair women, but to touch a Nair man marks a fall from Brahminhood. A Brahmin in the south is defiled even if a Kammalan (carpenter, *mistry* or blacksmith) stands at a distance of sixteen cubits. A Toddy maker, 24 cubits away, Palaya or Cheruma, 32 cubits away, and a Pariah 40 cubits away, may still contaminate the person of a Brahmin or any other member of the higher castes. Water, either of a tank or a well, is defiled and hence rendered unfit for the use of the Brahmins and other higher caste people, if a member of the lower

castes happens to pass in the proximity. If anybody happens to notice the process of cooking or the cooked food itself, the Vaishnavas of the south, belonging to the Rāmānuja sect, have to forego their meal for the day altogether.

In the Punjab or elsewhere, where the stock of Aryan extraction is in a majority, such tyranny in the name of caste is not only non-existent but also incomprehensible. It is only in the non-Aryan south that caste rules are rigid on the point of untouchability, and that too in the ranks of the so-called untouchables themselves. Even if the higher castes, by dint of their western learning and consequent liberal attitude and also by reason of various social and political considerations, make up their mind to resolve the tangled thread of the caste system, they are sure to encounter vigorous opposition from those whom they would like to emancipate. It has very often been observed that when idealist young men of the higher castes have actively engaged themselves in the work of social reform, they have been rewarded with ostracism by those very persons whom they had wanted to serve. In doing so they employ a queer logic. "Since this higher caste person interdines with me who belongs to the lower, who knows he might have accepted food from still lower castes?" and so on.¹

Thus, all these instances lead us to believe that perhaps the Aryans were not responsible for the introduction of the caste system. Their only failing lay in the fact that they could not outgrow the extant conditions of mutual exclusiveness and conflict among the existing castes of non-Aryan people. It is quite likely that they carried on an ineffective struggle against

1. Untouchability was made obsolete in Santiniketan long before the present Harijan movement was started in our country. When I joined the *asrama* in 1903 I found that almost all the servants were recruited from the two untouchable castes; viz. Hadis and Doms. With the exception of a very few, most of the inmates accepted food from their hands. About eight or ten years ago, on the occasion of a particular ceremony in my house, a number of *Muchis* cobblers, came and asked for food. That was a famine year. My Hadi and Doma servants would not even allow the beggars to enter the house. We ourselves made them welcome and gave them the excess food from the kitchen. My servants went on hunger-strike in protest.

this separtiveness before finally succumbing to it ; the force of numbers was against them. Now, with time and long habit, the idea of castes must have become deeply stamped on their own minds. In this connection, we must also remember that exclusiveness has become more and more a settled fact, with the progress of time as also with the increasing contact of a handful of Aryan colonizers with the non-Aryan natives.

The *Smritis* are the most authoritative documents on the origin and nature of the castes and amongst their authors the foremost place is assigned to Manu. Manu, the greatest legislator on caste system, belongs to a post-Vedic period and, according to Mr. Ketkar, was a native of Magadha. In his *History of Caste in India* (pp. 63), the learned scholar has given arguments in favour of this view. If what Mr. Ketkar says may be looked upon as a historical fact, then, our contention as to the non-Aryan character of caste-exclusiveness becomes considerably strengthened, especially in view of the fact that Magadha was outside the pure Aryan zone in those days.

In summing up, we discover that it was only gradually that the institution of castes came to be a rigid system in our society. Inter-caste marriages and inter-dining must have been a frequent phenomenon in the earliest times. Exclusiveness was of later evolution and that view is borne out by a careful study of the *Vedas*, *Smritis* and *Purāṇas*.

DESIRE FOR A HUMAN SOUL

ALL fruitless is the cry,
All vain this burning fire of desire.
The sun goes down to his rest.
There is gloom in the forest and glamour in the sky.
With downcast look and lingering steps
The evening star comes in the wake of departing day
And the breath of the twilight is deep with the fulness of
a farewell feeling.

I clasp both thine hands in mine,
And keep thine eyes prisoner with my hungry eyes ;
Seeking and crying, Where art thou,
Where, O, where !
Where is the immortal flame hidden in the depth of thee !
As in the solitary star of the dark evening sky
The light of heaven, with its immense mystery, is quivering,
In thine eyes, in the depth of their darkness
There shines a soul-beam tremulous with a wide mystery.
Speechless I gaze upon it,
And I plunge with all my heart
Into the deep of a fathomless longing :
I lose myself.

Rabindranath Tagore

[The above translation is interesting as being the first attempt made by the author (then a youthful poet—the translation is dated 1897) to render one of his Bengali poems into English. It was never intended for publication and has been only recently unearthed from among old files by his private secretary, Sj. Anil Kumar Chanda. We are grateful to the poet for allowing it to be published, as it is, in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.—Ed.]

LOOKING BACK

(*Continued*)

Rathindranath Tagore

AMERICA WELCOMES

AT about the beginning of the century—April 1906—a group of sixteen young men from Bengal ventured forth in quest of education or to seek their fortune in a decrepit cargo boat bound for the Far East. Their only resources were a concession passage provided by a benevolent society and a bunch of introductory letters. But the lack of material resources did not in any way cool the wild enthusiasm and the reckless spirit of this group, fresh from the political battle-ground of the Swadeshi upheaval of that period. Most of them wanted to acquire the technical knowledge and skill needed for modern industry and aspired to revive trade and commerce in India.* They had neither money, nor preliminary training and their ignorance of foreign countries whither they were bound was colossal. As a young boy of sixteen I did not find the company uncongenial, though strange and so utterly different from what we had got used to at Santiniketan.

Drifting from port to port along the coast of Malay and China we managed to reach Japan after about five weeks. Our admiration for Japan in those days was boundless. We looked upon every Japanese as a hero, who had helped to kill the spectre of the “foreign devil” in the Orient for good. Therefore we were overjoyed to arrive in Japan at the moment when they were celebrating the victory. I had a vivid recollection of how my father a few months ago had encouraged us to celebrate the

* A good many of them are at the head of big industrial concerns at present.

victory of Japan over the Russians at Santiniketan by lighting bonfires in several villages in the neighbourhood and unfurling a huge flag of the Rising Sun. We were conscious of the epoch-making character of this victory for Asia and readily joined in the round of festivities held in Tokyo. All the parks and public squares were tastefully decorated with piles of guns and ammunition captured from the Russians. We would everyday walk round and round these places with awe and veneration. Our regard for the Japanese rose to a still higher level when we found that on trams and other public conveyances the people, especially old men and women, would leave their seats to make room for us, all the time making deep obeisances, because we hailed from the country of Buddha's birth. We might have expected arrogance after such a military victory but not this touching humility to a spiritual ideal and it confirmed our faith in the Unity of Asia, so nobly preached by the great Japanese seer, Kakuzo Okakura.*

Most of my companions thought they had come far enough from home and their adventures ended on reaching that country. After many an amusing attempt to get passed by the American authorities the two of us who came from Santiniketan managed to get steerage passages in an American Pacific Liner. The American laws allowed only a small percentage of immigrants from Asia to land on the western coast. The poor doctor in charge of emigration had therefore to find some excuse to reject the others. After having been thus refused on the plea of an eye disease I went to consult a Japanese specialist. On learning the reason for my visit he laughed aloud and said he would give me a prescription not for treatment but for fooling the American doctor. It was nothing but a problem of mathematics. He asked me to appear before the doctor every day,—the man could not possibly remember all the faces as he had to examine thousands every day—, and it was only a question of luck how soon

* How strange and alien such a sentiment seems today ! Japan in striving for the mastery of Asia has lost its leadership.

I would get included in the 10 per cent quota. I was indeed lucky to get approved on the third day.

A third class passage in the steerage was an experience worth having in those times. We were herded together, twenty-eight in a cabin, lined with five tiers of bunks. This cabin also served as the dining-room. The overcrowded condition, the filth and the wretched food that was served are beyond description. But the worst of the torture that we suffered for seventeen days across the Pacific was the dregs of American men and women (there was no segregation of the sexes) whom we had for company. We had a few Japanese fellow-passengers also. One day a Japanese inadvertently had taken the customary seat of an American at the dining-table. This giant of a fellow not only abused the diminutive Japanese in the filthiest language but pulled out a knife and showed fight. Our *amour propre* was terribly hurt when instead of standing up the Jap sneaked out of the room. In a few moments, however, he was back with a contingent of fellow-countrymen and announced that now that they were equal in number to the Yankees they were prepared to fight. The honour of Asia was saved !

On the second day we went up to the tiny deck allotted to us to get a breath of fresh air. But very soon the supercilious look of the first class passengers as they looked down with amusement upon this sorry lot of humanity huddled together was more than we could bear and during the rest of the days never once did we attempt to go up again. It was a godsend that I had the collected edition of my father's works, edited by Prof. Mohit Chandra Sen and published shortly before we sailed. By the time the voyage ended we had learnt almost every sentence by heart. We hardly knew when we had stopped at Honolulu, as on account of an epidemic in the islands the passengers were not allowed to go on shore. Thinking that at last the agony was over, one evening we had our things packed and lay down with hardly any sleep with the excitement of arriving at San Francisco the next morning. While it was still dark we

crept up on the deck and kept our eyes screwed on the horizon towards which the boat was moving. A beautiful dawn broke with such a fantail of brilliant colours as only the Pacific can boast. We noticed that every officer had his binoculars fixedly pointed shoreward. An ominous silence hovered over the ship. Whisperings and nodding of heads ; then more binoculars brought out. Another long spell of silence. We on deck got nervous and suspicious. With a lurch the boat turned round. It was then that we saw what had seemed a mystery a few moments ago : the charred remains of a few sky-scrapers and thick black clouds of smoke slowly spreading out along the horizon in long serpentine coils and smirching with their foulness the brilliant sky. The boat stopped before the Golden Gate—no longer the golden gate leading to the Queen of Cities, but the gate leading to hell if any hell can be imagined on earth. Where the city had been there were heaped ruins, charred corpses and bewildered and famished animals roving about on roads twisted out of shape. Thus we learnt of the great earthquake and the fire that had devastated the city, and a shiver of horror ran through the boat. In those days the wireless had not been invented and we had no means of being warned about the disaster. This was the welcome we received from America, we two kids hugging to our breasts a solitary letter of introduction to somebody at Berkeley, which had been razed to the dust during the previous night.

FRONTIERS IN EUROPE

The tour of 1926 was a memorable one for various reasons. For those who had not been with my father on this tour, it is impossible to imagine the immense popularity and the ovation with which he was received in every country. At every place he visited he received not only a princely reception by the government officials as well as the populace but was treated with the

profound respect due to a prophet. At every railway station huge crowds would gather to have "darsan" or just touch the hem of his robe—a sight which hardly fitted in with our conception of the rationalistic and unemotional people of the West. From one end of Europe to the other we were carried along on the crest of this emotional tide. Towards the end of the tour we found ourselves in a more oriental setting in the Southern Balkans. After a short stay at Sofia, crowded with engagements and public receptions, we left this pretty capital of the Bulgars on the special train ordered by the king, and escorted by a host of officials, journalists and writers for a little town on the Roumanian frontier. It was a very short journey but the preparations for it were elaborate to the extreme. We had by this time become quite accustomed and almost indifferent to hearty welcomes, but such a demonstrative farewell seemed rather unusual. However, the royal suite of carriages soon reached its destination and we found ourselves on a wharf overhanging the banks of the Danube, which is the natural eastern boundary between the two countries. The river at these lower reaches is fairly wide and did indeed remind us of the Ganges. But imagine our surprise when we had to embark a battleship cruiser, gaily decorated with flags and buntings, to be ferried across the river to the Roumanian port-town on the opposite bank. This we did to the accompaniment of gun salutes and a brass band playing their loudest the national songs of the country. While all this noise was going on we noticed a certain amount of curiosity and eagerness on the part of our hosts scanning the scene on the opposite bank which we were approaching. This feeling very soon changed to one of amusement and then suddenly to hilarious mirth as the cruiser was banked on the side of a desolate pier with only one solitary person, who stood gesticulating and tearing his hair and gnashing his teeth at the approaching boat. A final salvo of guns and we were courteously escorted down the gangway into the arms of this wild-looking gentleman. As the boat moved out we could hear another loud burst of laughter and then the brass band

followed making incoherent noises. No explanation was offered to us at the time for the reason of these outbursts of vociferous mirth. The explanation came later from the disconsolate gentleman who received us and who happened to be the station master of the tiny railway terminus. The Bulgars had seen to it that no definite information of the time of our arrival reached the Roumanian government, so that there would be no previous arrangements welcoming father and conveying our party to the Roumanian capital. The discomfiture of the Roumanians on this occasion must have given the Bulgars many an hour of enjoyment afterwards.

A SWISS PEASANT

A summer holiday in the surroundings of St. Moritz, Switzerland, is a delightful experience. We were particularly fortunate in having the company of some Hungarian friends, which made the holidays still more enjoyable. We had chosen a comfortable but secluded hotel beside the lake at Sils Maria, just far enough from the sports-mad crowds that generally infest the famous summer resort. Our group of friends included the famous Hungarian violinist, Huberman. But we saw very little of him as he used to shut himself up in his suite and could rarely be persuaded to come down to the dining-room. We came to know of some of his idiosyncracies. Whenever he had to travel, not one but several contiguous suites and sometimes the whole floor had to be booked for him. Moreover, he always carried padded quilts which had to be fixed on to the doors and windows. Even after these precautions had been taken to make his room perfectly soundproof, he would complain of the noise.

One afternoon an excursion had been arranged to the Italian frontier. We sped on motor cars down winding roads through deep gorges and pine-covered valleys to this tiny hamlet

bordering on Italy. We stopped opposite a house where grew some palm trees and as I stood admiring these in such strange and foreign surroundings, a Hungarian friend suggested that we should call and find out more about the proprietor who had such taste. A very uncouth looking man came out and beckoned to us to go inside. But we had to discover one amongst our party who knew the particular dialect spoken amongst the peasants in this part of Switzerland before we could understand a word of what he said. One by one the whole party was introduced to him. When the names of my wife and myself were mentioned the man opened his mouth in astonishment and enquired if we had any connection with the poet. When the relationship was explained to him his astonishment knew no bounds and he began to shake with excitement. He ran inside, shouted for his sister and then catching hold of our hands dragged us upstairs to a room which to our great surprise we found filled from floor to ceiling with books. All the German translations of my father's works were there. But all this was nothing when to our intense astonishment the man dressed in the usual costume of the Swiss peasantry, with his rough hands pulled out a Sanskrit classic and began to recite poem after poem in the original. Through our interpreter I learnt that some years ago he had come across a translation of two lines from the *Upanishads* in a German book. These appealed to him so much that then and there he made up his mind to send for some Sanskrit books in order to learn the language and to read the original of those translations. His knowledge of Sanskrit which he had to pick up by himself without any help from anyone in that lonely spot in the mountains of Switzerland, forty miles away from any railway, seemed to me to cover a wide range of studies in literature and philosophy. We then met the sister who said that she was passionately fond of *Chitra*, *The Home and The World* and *Post Office*. Every evening she went out to give readings from these books to the other peasants of the village. For her livelihood she made leather cushions with Indian designs. The models of

the designs were taken from an old *bat-tala* edition of the *Ramayana* ; how she secured it is a mystery.

We returned home much richer by our contact with the peasant savant and the spontaneous homage of the two simple unsophisticated souls to cultural India made us feel inordinately proud of our heritage.

A STILL-BORN TRIP TO NORWAY

It was in 1920, a year after the Great War, when Europe had not quite settled down to normal conditions and political espionage was still widely encouraged by all governments that I had accompanied father to England, where he was soon flooded with invitations from every corner of Europe. In 1913 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize, he could not accept the invitation of the Nobel Committee to go in person to Sweden to receive the prize, as is the custom. Then the War interfered and now that he was in Europe again and the invitation had been renewed he could not very well refuse it. So it was settled that the first country to be visited on the Continent would be Sweden and the party to accompany him was to consist of Willie Pearson, who had volunteered to act as his private secretary, Mr. B——, a Parsi gentleman from Bombay, my wife and myself. In the meantime an opportunity occurred to add another member to the party. Father who always enjoys company felt quite happy about it. A lady was introduced to him by a well-known Orientalist whom we knew to be connected with politics but never suspected of lending himself as a tool of a government department, about the time we were making our plans for the continental tour. She made herself quite at home in our flat in the manner only the continentals can adopt and greatly pleased father by her interest in Eastern philosophy. When she came to hear of our plans she immediately offered herself to act as a guide at her own cost, saying that she knew almost everybody worth knowing in the

Scandinavian countries and that this little service she offered would help to repay an infinitesimal portion of the gratitude her countrymen felt for the great poet. Obviously she could not be refused. She began immediately to write letters and work out the details of the tour and proved so efficient and at the same time so amiable that both Pearson and myself felt considerably relieved. It had been settled that we were to cross the North Sea from Newhaven and land at Bergen in Norway. On the very eve of our departure, as is always my custom when travelling with father, I went to Thos. Cook's to purchase our tickets for the boat. I was a familiar figure with the passage department and the clerk who had got used to our ways; when handing over the tickets warned me with a smile, "No refund this time !"

On returning to our flat in South Kensington that evening with passports, passages, luggage labels and what not, I was immediately treated to a romantic story by B——, who had it fresh from his Swedish masseuse. It was the usual sordid kind told about international spies, so familiar during the days of the War and which in this instance applied to our future travelling companion. Pearson's moral indignation made him rush out to confront the lady with the truth. On father it had a different reaction. He asked me immediately to change the programme and arrange to leave for Paris the next morning. I had long ago become used to such lightning changes and after all did manage to get the refund of the tickets bought a few hours ago from the same clerk, without any other loss save of what little reputation was still standing to my credit as a reliable customer in that office.

Next evening we were in Paris and a few days afterwards I received a huge pile of cuttings taken from newspapers in Bergen which I have carefully preserved. Big headlines and front page descriptions of our arrival at Bergen and even photos of the party disembarking from the boat ! What a wonderful example of modern newspaper stunt ! And the lady who had posted them to me, how she must have enjoyed her triumph !



AUTUMN

By Benodebehari Mukherjee

DARA SHIKUH

Bikrama Jit 'Hasrat'

"Indian tradition remembers Dārā Shikūh not so much as an emperor's son, but as a mystic philosopher. The great dream of his life—a dream shattered by his untimely death—was the brotherhood of all faiths and the unity of mankind. After him the vision of unity was lost in the atmosphere of hatred and rivalry created by the warring sects and religious schools, and even today we are living in this age of religious disintegration."

(*Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II. p. 259.)

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Prince Muhammad Dārā Shikuh, the eldest son of Shāh Jahan and the heir-apparent to the throne, was born in the suburbs of Sāgartāl lake, near Ajmer, on 29 Safar, 1024 A. H. (Monday, March 20, 1615.) In the pages of the *Safīnat-ul-Awliyā*¹, Dārā Shikuh describes the date of his birth and says that his father, at the age of twenty-four, frequented the tomb of the great saint Mu'inuddīn Chīṣṭī and earnestly prayed for the birth of a son as all his previous children had been daughters. According to the author of the *Pādshāhnāma*, the birth of the heir-presumptive to the throne was hailed with great joy and festivity. Jahāngīr, the grand-father of the child, gave to the heir to his favourite son the name of Dārā Shikuh and the epithet of the

1 *Safīnat-ul-Awliyā*, an autograph MS. in the private collection of Raja Narendera Nath of Lahore (fol. 90. A.). The date of transcription of this valuable MS. which contains 224 folios 10" × 6", with written surface about 6½" × 8½", lines 15 per page, is 1049 A. H., i. e., the year in which it was compiled by the author.

Prince Rose of the Empire, which also gives the chronogram of his birth.²

Our sources on the childhood and early career of the prince are very scanty. It is indeed unfortunate that we know very little of his early life ; the contemporary Mughal chroniclers having left us very meagre information on this subject. The *Pādshahnāma* or the court history of the reign of Shah Jahan is the most authoritative account of the period. It records very minutely the political career of Dārā Shikuh, his ranks and promotions, gifts of jewels and horses and royal visits with which he was honoured by his father, but on the other hand it entirely passes over the early career, education, literary activities and the religious views of the prince. Next comes *Amal-i-Sālih* of Muhammad Sālih Kambu : a history of the reign of Shah Jahan, from his birth to his death in 1665 A. D. ; it forms a supplement to the *Pādshahnāma*. It also deals with the political events of the time and can hardly interest us. Other official and non-official histories of the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, viz., Muhammad Kāzim's *Ālamgīrnāma*, *Siyar-ul-Mutākhrīn*, *Latā'if-ul-Akbbār*, an anonymous account of the third siege of Kandhar, generally attributed to Badi'-ul-Zamān Rashid Khan, Muhammad Ma'sum's *Tarīkh-i-Shuja'i*, Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Shah Nawāz's *Ma'asir-ul-'Umera* and other semi-historical works do not throw much light on the childhood, education and literary and religious studies of Dārā Shikuh.

With such scanty external information we have no choice but to base our studies mainly on the writings of Dārā Shikuh ; from them, if no sufficient evidence is available, we unwillingly turn to the biassed accounts of the contemporary European travellers like Munacci, Bernier, Tavernier, Peter Munday and W. Irvine, whose incidental notices on the life of Dārā Shikuh we may accept with considerable caution and reserve.

EDUCATION AND STUDIES IN MYSTICISM

We know practically nothing about the progress made by the young prince in his studies. The *Pādsbānāma* of Abdul Hamid Lāhori⁸ only mentions “*ba maktab raftan*”, or the going to the school of the prince at the age of thirteen and tells that, Mulla Abdul Latif Sultanpuri⁴ was appointed his teacher. The primary and secondary course of Dārā’s studies seems to have been of the same stereotyped character as that of an average Mughal prince, who was usually taught the *Kuran*, the standard works of Persian poetry and the history of Timur. The chapter on “The Education of a Mughal Prince” by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his *Studies in Mughal India* suggests the lines on which we may presume that our young prince was educated. He studied the *Kuran* and the *Hadith* but with his eyes open and rejected from his childhood the commentaries of the orthodox school. It was Mulla Abdul Latif, as we know, who was responsible for the intellectual advancement of the prince, who developed scholarly habits and imbibed a passion for speculative sciences. His Sufistic leanings from an early age led him to study the well-known works on Islamic mysticism. This fact he mentions in his introduction to the *Sirr-i-Akbar* and a host of apt quotations from the various standard works on Sufism, given in the *Safinat-ul-Awliya*, the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya*, the *Risalu Hak Numa*, and his other works, bear equal witness to his extensive studies. Therein he works on the different Sufistic doctrines, but refrains from making a fetish of the stereotyped dogma. He traverses the same old ground as most of the earlier writers on mysticism had done, but arrives at reasoned conclusions independently.

8. *Ibid.* p. 844-845.

4. For an account of his life and accomplishments, vide. *Tadhkara -i-'Ulma-i-Hind* p. 88.

In his youth, he came into contact with many Muslim and Hindu mystics and acquired a knowledge of the devotional mysticism of the Sufis. Many of these were liberal thinkers who belonged to the catholic school of thought and were the exponents of "emancipation of the individual soul from the dead weight of dogma." His association with them widened his outlook and helped him to grasp the essence of religion through intuitive perception without attaching any importance to the dogmatic formalism of Islam.

Among other saints of different orders, whose life he has noticed in his works, especially the *Safinat-ul-Awliya* and the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya*, mention must be made of Mian Mîr (d. 1635 A. D.) and Mullah Shah Badakhshānî (d. 1661 A. D.), the most prominent saintly followers of the Kadirî Order, with whom he was on terms of the most affectionate intimacy, and both of whom exercised an overwhelming influence over his mind and finally initiated him into the most liberal and devotional teachings of the Sufism of the Kadirya fraternity. To this fact he alludes in the *Risala Hak Numa* :

"This *fakir* Dērē Shikūh belongs to that class of devotees who are attracted to God naturally He has come to know the mysteries of Godhead through the grace of saints and friends of God. He has hereafter benefited by the society of those masters and enquired into the truth of their teachings . . . One night he received the inspiration that the best path of reaching Divinity was the Kadirya Order."⁵

Referring to this divine injunction he adds :

"In the prime of my youth, Hatif, addressing me four times said, 'God would give you such a gift which has not been bestowed upon any emperor of the world.' In time the foreshadowing of it began to be manifest and day by day the veil was lifted little by little."⁶

5. *Risala Hak-Numa*, Lithographed, Lucknow ; p. 8.

6. *Ibid.* This is also to be found in the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya* (Urdu Translation), Lahore, p. 5.

Again in the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya* he remarks that the interpretation of this dream according to some gnostics was that Divine Knowledge was promised to him. He says :

"When I got up I thought that it must certainly be the gift of Divine Knowledge that God would bestow upon me as His real favour. I was always looking forward to it. In the year 1049 A. H. , I succeeded in obtaining the favour of one of His friends (Mullah Shah). He showed to me every kindness and the doors to Divine Knowledge were thrown open to me . . . I gained in one month what others would have done in a year. Briefly, notwithstanding my outward adherence to external formalism, I am not one of those who observe it and without being among the saints I am one of them."

His initiation into the Kadirya Order provided much scope for his spiritual fulfilment and opened for him the path of self-realisation and purity. His contact with other mystics, both Muhammadan and Hindu, like Shah Muhibullah, Shah Dilruba, Shah Muhammad Lisanullah Rostaki, Baba Lal Das Biragi, the saintly follower of Kabir and the scholarly Jagan Nath Misra, suggested to his mind the idea of establishing a sort of *rapprochement* between the apparently divergent principles of Islamic mysticism and Hindu philosophy. Gradually his interest in Sufism inclined him towards the mystic systems of other religions and by his association with the divines of various religious thoughts he studied the *Psalms*, the *Gospel* and the *Pentateuch*. Following the esoteric path of Islam, like his great-grandfather Akbar, he also extended his theosophical studies to Brahmanical scriptures. He read Sanskrit and patronised Sanskrit scholars and with the help of learned pandits of Benares, made a Persian translation of the *Upanishads* which was soon followed by similar translations of the *Yoga Vasishtha* and the *Bhagwad-Gita*. His deep interest in the cosmogony, metaphysics and the mystic symbolisms of the Hindus is manifest from his *Discourses with Baba Lal*.

It should not be considered, as is asserted by many⁸, that Dārā Shikuh's characteristic theosophist outlook and his leanings towards Hinduism were due to a political forethought and that he made most strenuous exertions as an heir-apparent to the much-coveted throne of Delhi, to overcome the difficulties which his predecessors might bequeath him—to become a more popular monarch to both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That certainly was the case with Akbar who made an attempt to weld into a political synthesis, the divergent creeds and different racial elements of India. Dārā Shikuh's approach towards Hinduism was from a different point of view. It was the approach of a seeker of truth, in whose heart was burning passion for knowledge, and who, irrespective of the basis of its source, eagerly sought it wherever he could find it.

Let us now proceed to discuss briefly the main object of his approach towards Hindu philosophy. To quote his own statements which he makes in a lengthy introduction to the translation of the *Upanishads*, he observes that he had many opportunities of meeting savants of diverse religions and had heard their views on the Unity of God, but the doctrine as expounded in their theological books failed to satisfy him. Thus he remarks :

"And whereas I was impressed with a longing to behold the gnostic divines of every sect and to hear the lofty expressions of monotheism and had cast my eyes upon many theological books and had been a follower thereof for many years : my passion for beholding the Unity, which is a boundless ocean, became every moment increased. Subtle doubts came into mind for which I had no possibility of solution, and whereas the Holy *Kuran* is almost totally enigmatical and at the present day the understanders thereof are very rare, I became desirous to collect into view all the revealed books as the very word of God itself might be its own commentary and if

8. *Ruk'āt-i-Ālamgiri*, Vol I. Here it will be noted with great surprise and pain that even the modern Muslim writers misrepresent the basic ideas and aims of the chief exponents of the evolution of Indo-Muslim thought in Medieval India. *Vide* p. 848, 851-871 and 401.

in one book it be compendious in another book it might be found diffusive.”⁹

In his quest for Unity of God he came to know that Hindu monotheists had given a clear exposition of the same, and so turning towards Hinduism he observes :—

“Thereafter I considered on what account is Hindustan conspicuous for montheism, is there so much discourse on Divine Unity and wherefore in the exterior and interior practices of this most ancient sect of Hind, is there no disavowal of the Divine Unity and no apostacy against the unitarians.”¹⁰

Proceeding, he remarks, that as a ‘mystic enthusiast and ardent advocate of the Unity of God’, he searched for Reality, no matter in what language, and that in quest for Truth, in the higher stages of its realisation, religion is of no matter.

“Whereas,” he goes on in the same strain, “this seeker of Truth had directed his views towards the origin of the Unity of Being in Arabic, Syrian, Chaldean, and Sanskrit language, he was desirous to comprehend the ‘Upenekhat’, which are a treasury of monotheism.”

Admitting the weight and superiority of Hinduism in point of the priority of the revelation of the four *Vedas* he continues that he translated the *Upanishads* in 1067 A.D. without any worldly motive and gave it the name of *Sirr-i-Akbar* (The Great Secret) because he regarded them as Divine Secrets and “without doubt or suspicion, the first of all heavenly books, in point of time, the source of the fountain of Reality and an ocean of Monotheism, *in conformity with the Holy Kuran and even a commen-*

9. *Sirr-i-Akbar* : An Introduction partly published at the Brijlal Press, Gujrân-walla, under the title *Kulliat-i-Dârâ Shikuh*, Vol 4 : also noticed in the *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire* (London 1782).

10. *Ibid* p. 2.

*tary thereon.*¹¹” In support of his assertion he cites the following verse from the *Kuran* :—

“Indeed the venerable *Kurân* is in a book, which is hidden. None shall touch it but the purified ones. It is a revelation by the Lord of the Worlds.”

(*Kurân* LVI ; 78-81.)

Commenting upon this verse he says :—

“It is evident to any person that this sentence is not applicable to the Psalms or to the Book of Moses or to the Gospel and by the word ‘revealed’, it is clear that it is not applicable to the Reserved Table (*Luh-i-Mahfūz*); and whereas the Upenekhets, which are ‘Secrets to be Concealed’, are the essence of this book *and the sentences of the Holy Kuran are literally found therein, of a certainty therefore, the hidden book is this most ancient book . . .*”¹²

While making such bold statements and being actuated by a desire to establish a fundamental similarity between the Islamic and Hindu doctrines on the Unity of God, he was conscious of the opposition of the narrow sectarianism of the orthodox school, to whom all referred on all questions on the Islamic law and doctrine. He treats these ‘*ignoramus*es’ with contemptuous disregard and observes :—

“But there is even a stock of faith, in opposition to the blockheads of the present time, who have established themselves for erudite and who falling into the traces of murder and molestation and apostatising from and disavowing the true proficients in God and Unitarians, display resistance against all the words of monotheism as is most evident from the glorious *Kurân* and authentic Traditions of the indubitable Prophecy, are highwaymen in the Path of God.”¹³

11. *Ibid.* p. 3-4.

12. *Ibid.* Vol 4. p. 5. Italics mine

13. *Ibid.* Vol 4. p. 6.

RELIGION OF DARĀ SHIKUH : DARĀ SHIKUH AND ISLAM.

Politics had a secondary place in the thoughts of Dārā Shikuh ; his first concern being the study of religious mysticism. A close examination of his works in their correct chronological order will reveal the fact that his earlier studies were purely Sufistic and were not extended to a close examination of the mystic systems of other religions. His earlier works, the *Safinat-ul-Awliya* and the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya*, written in 1049 A.H. and 1056 A.H. respectively, were the outcome of his respect for the Sufis and the religious divines. The third work in this category is the *Hasnat-ul-‘Arifin* or the Sufic Aphorisms which appeared a little later in 1062 A.H. In all these treatises he sets forth in detail the lives and the teachings of the saints of the different orders with sidelights on his own personal religious experiences. Following the traditional method of Sufistic theology he “gives expression to his inner ecstasies and his ardent aspiration towards the Ineffable. The method of treatment is generally intuitive and tendency of his thought is essentially pantheistic, having for its fundamental motive the direct contact or the union of human spirit with the Divine Being and the transformation of duality into Unity.”¹⁴

Although his mystic biographies were characterised by a deep note of devotional fervour and he had not developed, by this time, that catholicity of outlook and heterodox Sufi pantheism, which he knew would be bitterly opposed by the diehards of the orthodox school, “the blockheads without insight”; yet he clearly states :—

“Before this time, in a state of ecstasy and enthusiasm, I uttered some words appertaining to the Sublime Knowledge, certain sordid and abject fellows and some dry, insipid and and bigoted persons, on account of their narrow outlook, accused me of heresy. It was then I realised the

14. Dr. Yusuf Hussain in the *Prabudha Bharata* Vol. XLIV, No. 4.

importance of compiling the aphorisms of the great believers in Unity, the saints who have heretofore acquired the knowledge of Reality so that these may serve as an argument against the fellows who were really imposters (*Dajjals* : lit. Anti-Christ), although they wore the face of Christ and Pharaohs and *Abu-Jehls*, although they assume the guise of Moses and of the followers of Muhammad.”¹⁵

The Risala Hak Numa, completed early in 1056 A. H. , marks the first advance of his religious thought towards the esoteric faith of Islam. Herein he describes the four planes of existence ; *viz.*, the Physical Plane, the Astro-Mental Plane, the Plane of Bliss and the Plane of Divinity, corresponding respectively with the four states of human consciousness known as wakefulness, dream, sleep and trance-consciousness. Though as early as 1056 A. H. his works do not betray his leanings towards the Hindu doctrines and he says that the *Risala* records ‘without a hair’s difference the austere practices, meditations, method of sitting, moving and acting by the holy Prophet’ and that it is a compendium of the standard works on Sufism like *Fatubat*, *Faşuş*, *Lawaib* and *Lam’ât*, etc. , yet the account of the modes and internal significance of these practices seem to have been borrowed from the *Yoga* system of Hindu asceticism. So we find that gradually he was moving towards the study of asceticism, the various stages of spiritual development and the ways and means of reaching the pitch of spiritual perfection. These he considered essential for “becoming proficient in mystic contemplation and introspection.”

The year 1056 A. H. was a turning-point in his studies in religion. It marks the beginning of his examination of the system of various religions, but till 1062 A. H. he does not express his opinion. With an insatiable thirst for Knowledge and Truth he occupied himself in its acquisition. He patronised learned

15. *Ḥasnat-ul-ʿArifin* or *Shaḥnāt-i-Dārā Shikūh*. Ms. in the Punjab University Library. (fol 72 b.)

men of all denominations, saints, theologians, philosophers, poets and writers of every creed and community—Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Jews, etc. He studied Sanskrit and became deeply interested in the *Vedanta* and *Yoga* philosophy, Hindu ritual and mythology and from the learned pandits of Benares he learned the secrets of Hindu philosophy and legend and initiated himself into the practices of *Yoga* by contacts with *yogis* and *sadhus*.

Thus his religious outlook changed and a new idea of universal brotherhood dawned upon his mind, as a result of which appeared the *Majma'-ul-Babrīn*, or the Mingling of the Two Oceans, a treatise in which he made the first attempt of its own kind to reconcile the doctrines of *Brahma Vidya* and the tenets of *al-Kuran*. *Majma'-ul-Babrīn*, though a treatise on the technical terms of Hindu pantheism and their equivalents in Sufi phraseology, devoid of any deep insight or great spirituality, is of extreme importance to a student of comparative religion inasmuch as that therein Dārā Shikuh has tried to bring out the points of similarity and identity between Hinduism and Islam and has endeavoured to show where the two oceans of mystic thought meet. "His attempt to achieve this end," remarks Dr. Yusuf Hussain, "clearly shows that he did not want to engraft the one on the other through a shallow eclecticism like his grandfather Akbar. He was actuated by a desire to prove that both Islam and Hinduism, in appearance so fundamentally dissimilar, are essentially the same. Both represent spiritual efforts of man to realize Truth and God." ¹⁶

This came as a bombshell to the orthodox Muhammadan circle, who denounced him as a heretic, atheist, hypocrite, opportunist and devoid of all religion. His fraternization with Hindus was ridiculed. While condemning his conception, which he had formed after much study and contemplation that there existed a fundamental unity between Hindu philosophy and

16. *L' Inde Mystique au Moyen Age* (Paris); also the *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. XLIV, No. 4.

Islamic mysticism, the author of the *Ālamṛnāma* charges Dārā Shikuh with the zeal of an orthodox Mussalman :—

“Dārā Shikuh in his later years,” he remarks, “did not restrict himself to the free-thinking and heretical notions which he had adopted under the name of *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) but showed an inclination for the religion and institutions of the Hindus. He was constantly in the society of Brahmans, *yogis* and *sanyasis*, and he used to regard these worthless teachers of delusions as learned and true masters of wisdom. He considered their books which they call *Beḍ* (*Vedas*) as being the Word of God and revealed from heaven, and he called them ancient and excellent books, in the translation of which he was much employed. Instead of the sacred name of *Allah*, he adopted the Hindu name *Prabhu* (Lord) ... and he had this name engraved in Hindi letters upon his rings. . . . Through these perverted opinions he had given up the prayers, fasting, and other obligations imposed by the law and it became manifest that if Dārā Shikuh obtained the throne, and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger, and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the *rant* of infidelity (Hinduism) and Judaism.”¹⁷

It is no denying the fact that it was his interest in the Hindu scriptures and especially his writing of the *Majma'-ul-Babrîn*, which procured a decree from the legal advisers of Aurangzeb that “Dārā Shikuh had apostatized from the law and having vilified the religion of God had allied himself with heresy.” Consequently an order for his execution was given in 1659 A. D.

Let us now turn to the other side of the medal. In all his works, as will be shown in the following pages, there is not the slightest indication, that he had renounced Islam and become a Hindu, as is alleged by a biased section of the community. The very Introductions to his works, which he has begun with the praises of God, the Prophet, his companions and the descendants, will belie such presumption. With a unique idealism in view, he tried to liberate the spirit of Islam from the dogmatism of the time. In his ambition “to supplant exoteric Islam by esoteric mysticism as a living moral force among the Muslim intellec-

17. Muhammad Kāzīm in Eliot's translation : Vol. VII. p. 179.

tuals", the forces of conservatism and reaction termed him as an apostate and a heretic. Like many Sufis of Islam, he too, differed from the orthodox in the interpretation of the true spirit of Islam and lost his head. Never refusing his outward conformity to Islam, he openly accepted the views of other religions and assumed a policy of *Ṣulh-i-Kul* or Peace with All. His attempts to prove that the ideas of the Hindu cosmogony are similar to those embodied in the *Kuran* might seem irreligious and ridiculous to an orthodox Mussalman, but to a man of wider outlook, be he a Hindu or a Mussalman, this came as an inspiration ; placing religion on a broader foundation, it tended to create a brotherhood of Universal religion between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Such efforts, though startling innovations denounced by the orthodoxy as rank heresy, left a very deep impression in their wake. It harmonised for the time being the relations between them and swept away social and to some extent political disqualifications due to religious differences. Bernier graphically sums up Dārā Shikuh's attitude towards Islam and other religions in the following words :—

"Born a Muhametan, he continued in the exercise of that religion ; but although thus publicly professing his adherence to the faith, Dara was in private a Gentile with a Gentile and a Christian with a Christian."¹⁸

Even European writers have jumped at wild and most absurd conclusions about the religion of Dārā Shikuh, simply because he showed proclivities to other religions and was "a Gentile with a Gentile and a Christian with a Christian." Munacci says that Dārā had no religion but praised the doctrines of any religion with which he came in contact. Like his great-grandfather he took delight in polemic discussions between the doctors of different creeds. He was very fond of Europeans, especially of the Jesuit Father Buzee. Continuing, Munacci narrates a

18. *Travels* p. 6.

fantastic story to show that Dārā Shikuh died a Christian at heart. He writes : 19

"During his confinement in the prison, just before his execution, when his son Siphār Shikuh was separated from him, he begged that Father Buzee or some other Christian priest should be brought to him and finding himself unable to obtain his wish he began in loud and heart-rending voice to say the words, 'Muhammad killed me and the Son of God (Christ) gave me life'."

Such illustrative accounts of the European writers must not be taken at their face value but accepted with great caution and reserve.

Neither was it his aim to adapt Muhammadan formulae contained in the Islamic theology to Hindu scriptures, but, as we have seen, as an ardent lover of comparative religion, he became familiar with the spirit of Hindu thought, mainly restricting his approach towards the various identical points of mythology, asceticism and religious practices of both. Though this was hateful to the *mullahs*, in reality Dara never discarded the fundamental principles of Islam and never wavered in the strict performance of his religious duties. He was most assiduous in paying visits to the shrines of the Muslim saints and treated with utmost reverence and admiration all the living saints who had acquired a fame for piety. This was because he did not regard Hinduism and Islam as two entirely independent camps. In his estimation they did not stand widely apart representing two irreconcilable religions. He knew that the conflict between the *pandit* and the *mullah* was on the ground of ritual, but that in spiritual matters they could be easily reconciled.

Overlooking the sectarian dogma or philosophical disputes, there exists upto this day a cultural unity and due to the free association of ideas, their ideals are related to each other. Such cultural bonds of Indo-Muslim thought, it is hard for anybody to deny.

19. *Storia del Mogor*. Vol. 1 pp. 221.

"Undoubtedly the prince struck an original line of investigation", says Dr. Kanungo, "which, if honestly perused, may achieve greater things for the benefit of the neglected commonalty, in the present century, when the fate of India depends on a fresh attempt at the mutual comprehension of two spiritual elements and an appreciative study of the two apparently discordant cultures."²⁰

Dārā Shikuh was a Muslim and a member of the Kadirya²¹ fraternity. His toleration and admiration for other religions must always be taken in the light that it forms a starting-point in the evolution of Indo-Muslim thought,—an early attempt to transplant Indian thought into the Islamic world. John von Menon, the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, pays a glowing tribute to Dārā Shikuh in the following words :—

"As the last continuator of a short line of activity begun by his great-grandfather, Akbar, he is also an historical figure in the development of Indian thought. For all these and many other reasons we welcome the present work (*Majma'-ul-Bahrin*) in which beyond the gulf of death, to the voice of Hindu-Muslim Unity, he has given life again, insistent, sincere and tragic."²¹

DARA SHIKUH AS A MAN

Before proceeding further, a word about Dārā Shikuh as a man may be mentioned. W. Irvine has summed up his character in these words :—

"He was a man of dignified manners, of comely countenance, joyous and polite in conversation, ready and gracious of speech, of extraordinary liberality, kindly and compassionate, but over-confident in his opinion of himself, considering himself competent in all things and having no need of advisers."²²

20. *Dārā Shikuh* : A Biography, Vol I.

21. *Majma'-ul-Bahrin* (Bib. Ind.) iii. 4.

22. Opt. cit.

Similar is the account given by other European writers. Bernier²⁸ also says that he entertained too exalted an opinion of himself, believed he could accomplish everything by the powers of his own mind...that he was also very irascible, apt to menace, abusive and insulting even to great *omrabs*. It is really unfortunate that the prince, who devoted the greater part of his life to carrying on a literary propaganda for the promotion of peace and concord between the two conflicting creeds of India, should be vilified thus. The European always judges the Easterner by his own standards. The losing side always gets scanty justice at his hands. Lanepool²⁴ calls him "inordinately conceited, self-satisfied and an emancipated antagonist." Had the vision of these European historians transcended the ordinary limitations imposed by worldly conventions, they would have certainly known Dārā Shikuh as a man, who was never proud and self-conceited. Notwithstanding his princely dignity and intellectual gifts, he was kind and humble and was never extremely intolerent of advice and contradiction. On the contrary, he accepted advice on philosophical and theological matters irrespective of the social status or the religious creed of the adviser, be he a Hindu mendicant like Baba Lal or a missionary of the Company of Jesus like the Reverend Father Buzee.

(*To be continued*).

28. *Ibid* p. 6.

24. *Vide Aurangzeb*, p. 22.

ANTARDEVATA*

Rabindranath Tagore

SORROW's flood-tide sweeps the world to-day. Great memorials of history are being washed away, ancient boundaries of civilisation obliterated. Barbarism, robbed of its cloak, stands revealed; with arrogant mocking it flaunts destructive revelry against mankind. From the depth of man's anguished heart comes the cry—Why is this? Angry voices are raised refusing to recognise the presence of a benevolent principle anywhere in this cataclysmic fury.

To doubters I ask, were there no principle of goodness at the centre of creation, why does humanity, at the mortal struggle of an age, suffer from this world-wide agony? Does not disease, with its suffering, prove that in the freedom of health dwells life's inherent truth? Suffering is denial while health is affirmation of life; our body, acknowledging this, offers stout fight to the last. If disease had caused us no suffering, then indeed we could have accused life as being treacherous.

War has burst on all sides. Who causes this war? The insulted monarchy of the Good in the heart of the Universe. This insult was being heaped up for long under the far-flung patronage of power; filling its store-room with looted goods, power soon identified possessiveness with the principle of right. Practising oppression, it declared God to be on its side. Then destruction touched its own roots, all peace vanished, the entire race arrayed itself in weapons and military monstrosity; swollen-up munition dumps, like a red boil, became more inflamed. Mutual suspicion, unrest, repression's ugly trickery wrought by poisoned minds, sly diplomatic torture and sham decency spread their tentacles in lying politics and tyrannical government. If war stopped for

* Address delivered at Santiniketan Mandir on the 7th Pous (28rd. December, 1989). Translated by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty.

a while, peace did not arrive ; in the subterranean depths of history rumbling earthquakes heralded fresh disaster. Natural human contact daily grew impossible, barbed obstacles were raised in the path of hospitality, behaviour forgetting all civilised tradition reverted to savagery. The fact that deadly symptoms of evil can no longer be hidden proves that beneficence, abiding in human history, keeps vigilant judgment. In society, as in our bodily system, the principle of self-preservation remains active ; safeguarding humanity, it works in man's wakeful being. Violation of this principle has brought suffering to man, and death ; had this not been so, creation's law would have been suspect. In the world's history many races have perished, either for unpardonable weakness or for sinful lust of power. We were not sure if, today, some races have not been summoned for judgment at death's court.

Beneficent providence, in our scriptures, has never been reduced to mere mercifulness from whom men, like children, could crave indulgence. *Rudra yat te dakshinam mukham tena mam pahi nityam* : he is Rudra, the Terrible, who yet protects by his goodness whatever is true, courageous and pure : whatever testifies to man's faith in his unconquerable majesty. Helpless inanition Rudra never forgives.

Man's highest prayer is that he may reach from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality. This is not a prayer for the weak but a challenge from man's final blessedness, calling him toward fulfilment through toil and travail. It brings Rudra's inspiration from man's inner being, and sets him on the arduous path of truth.

Surprised I feel, and ashamed, when our literature offers petulant tirades against Providence, nasally intonated and garbed in ridiculous gesture, punishing him for not existing at all, simply because one has suffered personally or seen some one else suffer. We forget that our scriptures have said : *Varenyam bhargo devasya dheemahi*,—we contemplate the energy of the adorable God—*dhiyo yonah prachodayat*, who gives us Reason. It

has not been said that Providence nurses the inefficient weakling on his lap. He gives us Reason, that is to say, on ourselves we have to depend. We are forbidden by his ruling to knock tearfully at his door. To him I offer my salute because he has kept himself away from our sphere and does not, like an ever-anxious mother, constantly reveal his presence. My manhood he has dowered with respect, giving me the full right of responsibility. He does not lead the coward by the hand but makes him travel even through the experience of death so that he can live unafraid. Hence this paradox : those who rule out God from their belief can yet win the fruits of faith by using Reason to attain reality. Fulfilment awaits those who do not supplicate at God's shrine for removing disease, suffering, ignorance, inefficiency ; who have accepted him as divinely rational and not as Sarasvati or Ganesha ; who have realised him in their own creative power and magnified him, winning his companionship on the road of immortal life. They have not, as yet, discovered a cure for cancer but applying their Reason—that which dwells in the deep recesses of being—they have identified themselves with divine Reason, contemplating him in their enlightened mind ; they have never insulted their manhood by pursuing magical words and nostrums. To them will come the cure for disease, won by resolute conviction. But, on the opposite side, what wailing and complaint—the cry of children who boastfully refuse to acknowledge him ! Who has asked for their recognition ? Do they hope to minimise him by their refusal ! His punishment is not for those who reject specific names and forms in acknowledging him, but for those who frustrate his purpose by failing to recognise their own intelligence.

Do you not realise that birds and beasts have got their dress unasked, while to man, born naked, Providence has given far greater honour by uniting him with divine intelligence—*Dhiyo yonah prachodayat* ? Should we not remember this when we suffer from want of clothing ? No other living creature suffers so much, but through suffering he calls us—he who has

given us Reason. This call is not to any one of us, but to all mankind. Those who do not respond to it but rush to seek the protection of temple-guides and priests ever die unfulfilled, having disgraced their own divinity.

But Reason which comes to us is not of the category of mere knowledge, it has another aspect which is its highest—the will for goodness. *Sa no buddhya shubhaya sang junaktu* : may he become one with us through the union of good will. The frustration of intellectual knowledge, by man's physical nature, leads to distress in living ; the distortion of our sense of duty in the realm of moral life also brings disaster to human society. Led by passions we insult him who gives us Reason—*dhiyo yonah prachodayat*—and it leads to great destruction. Inauspicious signs of such destruction have suddenly overwhelmed us from all sides. Those who blame their opponents for iniquity and proclaim their own saintliness will not escape ; dexterity in special pleading will not bring mercy. *Mahatbhayam Vajramudya-tam*, the Great Terror is here, holding the Thunderbolt.

Following greed's path some have won temporal success, and in their drunken egoism ignored their own divinity ; using Science they have felt well-protected by their possessions and claimed the right to inflict injustice and oppression. But they are losing, from age to age, the contact of their godliness. The prescribed temple of worship can be entered with the accumulated load of unrighteousness, even the orthodox texts of prayer may not stick in their mouth, but in their heart the darkness of passion has shrouded the inner god. In that obscurity their path becomes difficult indeed ; blind forces are generated and strike at the roots of entire society ; at first slowly, then suddenly at last in terrific onslaught.

To those in our country who in weakling anger sit and lament that God does not come and wipe their tears, I would offer the following message from the *Upanishads* :

Atha yonyam devatam upaste, anyosau, anyo'ham, asmeeti na sa veda, yatha pashureva devanam.

He who worshipping separate divinity thinks that he is one and divinity another, is like an animal of the gods. On man's behalf no religious text, in any land, has dared to utter such mighty words, and yet in no other country but ours could more flagrant breach of it be witnessed.

Even like a beast man began his life, in want, ignorance, haunting fear. Had that been his true existence those conditions would have been permanent. But who has dragged man out of it—is he some external god with a special name? Has some non-human entity, satiated with the blood of victims, offered man a boon? Has man obtained reward from any god in exchange for flattering verses? No, man is not an animal of the gods. Divine reality, united with man, has given us knowledge and science, our society and civilisation, and slowly revealed his luminous presence in history. That has been the result of no little suffering. Staking his life heroic man has controlled the primitive animal within, and also discovered his own godliness.

This discovery goes on through the fearless unremitting effort of brave generations. Where we are unsuccessful, where we are defeated, there must we suffer and never merit indulgence; in shameless petulance let us not demand pity when we have insulted our own godliness, and then cry out that God is not there. If he is not there, whose fault is it? Enmeshed in inertia the coward denies his own reality and then rushing to the feet of some *guru*, or bribing some priests, deafens his powers by the harsh clang of bells and cymbals. That is why I say, let us not forget the message of the *Brihadaranyaka* :

Atha yonyam devatam upaste, anyosau, anyo'ham, asmeeti na sa veda, yatha pashureva devanam,

We must remember, *yuktatmanah sarvamevabishanti* ; through the mastery of the power of his own being man enters everywhere, from the starry universe to the subtlest mysteries of the human heart. *Tam hi devam atmabuddhiprakasham*, in his own rational mind is that god revealed, and through it must come realisation. *Je purushe brahma viduste paramesthinam* : those who

know the Great in man know the supreme God. *Tam vedyam purusham veda* ; by hiding God in one's soul and proclaiming that he does not exist outside let us not vainly insult him.

The varied sufferings of worldly life need not be taken too seriously ; they come either because of natural laws or of some mental principles—both are external. But we have seen men conquering pain by undaunted prowess, plunging into fiery ordeals only to march forward with triumph. What striving is this ?—The power that lies behind is neither physical, nor mental, it belongs to the inward self where man is united with his God. Realising greatness within himself man does not express sorrow at any sacrifice or pain : *yada pasyati anyam eesham asya mahimanam iti beetashokah*. He who has realised the glory of God in his own soul, freed is he from fear and suffering ; to whose door can he march ever with complaints, whom can he blame ? Those who have attained realisation within can offer their all without hesitation and with unbounded joy ; dedicating themselves wholly they lead history from life's daily niggardliness to the realm of perfection. If they have any complaints those are self-directed, the pain is terrible. Not that such heroes have never known defeat, but their banner is raised high over all failures.

Blessed are we, blessed is man, not because some god is ruling us, but because our own divinity is honouring us by sorrow after sorrow. Blessed is man that he is not an animal of the gods, but is one with God.

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

Vol. V, Part IV, New Series

February 1940—April 1940

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THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

February

New Series, Vol. V, Part IV

1940

SATYAM*

Rabindranath Tagore

SINCE, in the East, our minds grew weary of producing new thoughts and our lives ceased to carry out new experiments we have been losing our sense of balance through want of practice. This has been the cause of a lack of proportion in our thinking, leading to inaccuracy and exaggeration, and of a lack of reticence in our spiritual vision producing a wilderness of symbolism and superstition.

On the other hand, when we try to follow the West in its pursuit of speed we forget that any movement that tears itself away from the eternal standard of rhythm is a frightful form of inertia. Such a movement belongs to the giants of disproportion who let loose immense forces from the bondage of beneficent limits and startle the world with their turbulence. At last the uncontrolled tumult of their own passion seeks peace through explosions and breaks them into pieces.

It is evident that life in the West, like an iceberg tottering under the weight of its growing hugeness, has lost its moral balance. The West knows that things are behaving in a drunken manner, but she does not know how to stop. She is casting about for some device to save herself from a crash, not by closing her drinking booths, but in spite of them.

* This article was originally delivered as a lecture in China in 1924 and later on published by Visvabharati. Its striking relevance in 1940 is our excuse for republishing it in this Journal.—*Ed.*

The young generation of the East, who in their intoxication with the new wine of boisterous energy from the West are likewise growing unstable in their gait, are content jeeringly to remark that our pursuit of the cult of perfection which gives balance has led us to inertia. They forget that balance is even more needed for that which moves than for that which rests. I have been led to think deeply about the contagion of this moral drunkenness that spreads from shore to shore.

While I was travelling to China, one of my Indian friends asked a Japanese fellow-traveller why Japan neglected to cultivate friendliness with China. Without giving a direct answer, the Japanese asked a German passenger, who was there, if he could ever think of Germany and France uniting in bonds of friendship. This clearly shows the spirit of the schoolboy in the present generation of Eastern youth brought up under Western school-masters. They have learnt by rote their texts, but not their lesson. They are proud when they can mimic the voice and gesture of their teacher, reproduce his language, earn their full number of marks and a patting on the back, while not even aware that the living lesson has escaped them.

It evidently caused great satisfaction to this Japanese young man, who, I am sure, does not represent the best minds of his people, to know that the feeling of animosity that exists between China and Japan has its analogy in Europe. He failed to realise the fearful meaning of the hatred which furiously drives Germany and France to ruin, in a vicious circle of mutual destruction. This conversation set my mind thinking how the carefully nurtured yet noxious plant of national egoism is shedding its seeds all over the world, making our callow schoolboys of the East rejoice because the harvest produced by these seeds,—the harvest of antipathy with its endless cycle of self-renewal,—bears a western name of high-sounding distinction.

Great civilisations have flourished in the past in the East as well as in the West because they produced food for the spirit of man for all time ; they had their life in the faith in ideals, the

faith which is creative. These great civilisations were at last run to death by men of the type of our precocious schoolboys of modern times, smart and superficially critical, worshippers of self, shrewd bargainers in the market of profit and power, efficient in their handling of the ephemeral, who presumed to buy human souls with their money and threw them into their dust bins when they had been sucked dry, and who, eventually, driven by suicidal forces of passion, set their neighbours' houses on fire and were themselves enveloped by the flame.

It is some great ideal which creates great societies of men ; it is some blind passion which breaks them to pieces. They thrive so long as they produce food for life ; they perish when they suck life dry in insatiate self-gratification. We have been taught by our sages that it is Truth and not things which saves man from annihilation.

It has been the tradition in India closely to attach our mind to some *mantram*, some great text, and daily to concentrate our thought upon it, while its meaning grows one with our being, and gives our worldly life its equilibrium. One such *mantram* which has been of great help to me, begins with the word *Satyam*, indicating that the Supreme Being is *Satyam*, which means truth.

Man is afraid of the numerous, of numbers which add but do not connect. It is wearisome for him to approach things through their several individual doors and pay to each one of them its separate homage of recognition. At the beginning of life's experience a child puts everything into its mouth, until it gets to know that all that comes to its hand is not food. In the primitive stage of our intellect, our mind, in its indiscriminate greed, grabs at detached facts and tries to make a store of them. At last the mind comes to know that what it seeks is not the things themselves, but, through them, some value.

Where can man realise *Satyam*, the Supreme Reality ? Nothing is ever in a state of quietude ; things rapidly change

their form and become something else, even as we try to fix our gaze on them. The very mountains, which are looked upon as the symbol of solid permanence, behave like shifting screens on time's stage, and one never knows when they may slowly be folded up as the play proceeds and one act gives way to another. The stars are bubbling out into light on the bosom of darkness and dissolving into oblivion. So, in Sanskrit, our term for the world phenomenon is *samsara*, or that which is ever on the move,—and this *samsara* we know as *maya*, we call it a dream. Where then is Truth ?

Does it not become evident that Truth must have its full expression only in this movement itself,—in the current which always leaps over the fixed boulders of finality and can therefore suggest the indefinable, the infinite ? In a dance it becomes possible for the different gestures to move together and yet not thwart each other because they are the expression of a certain musical truth which is ineffable, which comprehends and yet transcends each separate part of its manifestation.

Moralists have often lugubriously cried out that the world is vanity because everything in it moves and changes. They might as well say that a song is not real because every note is transient, giving place to another. We have to know that this moving and changing world, because of its mutability, is giving expression to a truth which is eternal. It would come to a standstill in a crash of discord, had it not such truth permeating and transcending it.

It is to the person, who keeps his eyes solely fixed upon this aspect of the world which is an unceasing series of changes, that the world appears as delusion, as the play of Kali, the black divinity of destruction. To such a one it becomes possible for his dealings with this world to be superficial and heartless. The world being for him an unmeaning progression of things, an evolution that goes blindly jumping from chance to chance on a haphazard path of survival, he can have no scruple in gathering opportunity for himself, dealing cruel blows to others who come

in his way. He does not suspect that thereby he hurts his own truth, because, in the scheme of things, he recognises no such truth at all. A child can tear, without compunction, the pages of a book for the purposes of his play, because for him those pages have no serious truth.

The way to be considerate in our dealings with the world is to realise the permanent meaning which underlies it and makes each one of its changing facts touch its end every moment. It happens in this way with our own movements of vital growth ; they are innumerable, and yet they have their joy for us because every passing fraction of their totality immediately reaches its end, which is life itself. This very moment, when I am speaking, all my separate words would be a burden to me, if they were not the expression of my life, of my mind, which is the source of their truth.

What is *evident* in this world is the endless procession of moving things ; but what is to be *realised* is the Supreme Truth by which the world is permeated. When our greed of wealth overlooks this great truth and behaves as if there were nothing in this world but the fact of these moving things, then our pride rises with the amount of things produced and collected, and jealous competition thunders down the path of conflict towards dark futility.

Thus, according to the Upanishad, the complete aspect of Truth is in the reconciliation of the finite and the infinite, of ever-changing things and the eternal spirit of perfection. When in our life and work the harmony between these two is broken, then either our life is thinned into a shadow, or it is set on fire.

We must confess that in the East our minds have dwelt more upon the peace of the Eternal One and not so much on the movement of its manifestation in the many. This mentality represents a kind of miserliness about one's spiritual wealth which tries to keep it secure by shutting it within a limited receptacle. Such narrow limitation of our world has produced

in us a simplicity whose contents are small. It has given us long life, but not that vigour of life which is ready to earn a richness of experience in untried adventures. The river of Truth's ideals, which once sprang in the East from the ever wakeful personalities of great souls, has in course of centuries become stagnant, its flow of inspiration choked by the reeds and rubbish of a lazy imagination.

When the current of the mind grows feeble, things that are dead accumulate, their ponderous immobility intimidates our life into stillness. This awful burden of the dead we see in China as well as in my own motherland. Because we have surrendered our right to question, and have deliberately refused to understand, we are constantly paying the penalty of sacrificing our soul on the altar of the lifeless. We are extending in every department of our life the burial ground of the past, erecting tombstones in places where bread should be produced for the growing need of the future. What immense energy do we waste in trying to prevent dead bones from crumbling into the dust ! The current of immortal truth from the past once had its river bed open through our life. It is growing narrower every day ; the sand which chokes it claims reverent attention from us owing to the sublimity of its immutable barrenness.

Ideals of perfection have to be re-born age after age, taking new bodies and occupying new fields of life. Otherwise, if they end in mere thoughtless repetitions, human beings become puppets of the past with a ludicrous pride in the strings that produce perfectly correct gestures. Solemn doll's play of this kind could perhaps go on indefinitely if its stage were but secure from outward intrusion, and was not liable to be hustled out of gear by irreverent crowds who rudely snatch away its adornments for their own distant markets.

It is, indeed, just such a disrespectful shaking up by these marketmen that may lead us to our salvation. It has already roused us from our languor; and the awakened, at least, must think, even while the drowsy may continue to mumble their

repetitions. The first effect of our sudden discomfiture is a mistrust of the original ideals themselves. It may take some time before we are able to realise that it was not those ideals that were to blame, but our own treatment of them. For if our ideals, which are for giving freedom to our spirit, are shut up in a dungeon of blind habit then they become the strongest fetters that keep our spirit enchained.

Life is rebellious. It grows by breaking the forms that enclose it, the forms that only give shelter for a particular period, and then become a prison if they do not change. Death is the last fight of freedom of this born rebel always trying to break the form that has gone wrong. In our society wherever that spirit of rebellion, which is the spirit of life, is completely checked, the tyranny of form becomes supreme ; there words become more sacred than spirit, and custom than reason. We do not serve Truth by passively clinging to it with our habits, but by deliberately relating all our movements to it as the centre, thus attaining both rhythm of control and freedom of spirit.

It is true that he who wants to realise truth, not merely through self-control, but also through freedom, is assailed by dangers and difficulties; but as a brook finds its voice more fully as it trips over its bed of flints and stones, this very resistance brings a richer music into his life. For those who are in love with a serene slothfulness, with whom every movement in the direction of active creative effort weighs as an offence against the ancient dignity of tradition,—their being is smothered under exuberant growths of disease and distress, poverty, insult and defeat. They are punished with the deprivation of freedom because they try to keep Truth fettered.

I have said that life is rebellious. Some of our Eastern schoolboys may at once jump to the conclusion that this rebellion must take form in imitation of the West. But they should know that while our dead custom is plagiarism from our own past life, imitation would be plagiarism from other peoples'

life. Both of them constitute slavery to the unreal. The former, though a chain, at least fits our figure; the latter, for all its misfit, is just as much a chain. Life frees itself through its growth and not through its borrowing.

It will never do for the Orient to trail behind the West like an artificial appendix, sweeping with it the soot-laden dust, and vainly trying to imitate its gesture of lashing the sky in defiance of the divine. For humanity this will not only be a useless excess, but a disappointment and a deception. For if the East ever tries to duplicate Western life, the duplicate is bound to be a forgery.

The West no doubt has overwhelmed us with its flood of commodities, tourists, machine guns, school masters, and a religion which is great, but whose followers are intent upon lengthening the list of its recruits, and not following it in details that bring no profit, or in practices that are inconvenient. But one great service the West has done us by bringing the force of its living mind to bear upon our life; it has stirred our thoughts into activity. For its mind is great, its intellectual life having in its centre intellectual probity, the standard of truth.

The first effect of our mind being startled from its sleep is to make it intensely conscious of what is before it; but when the surprise of awakening has subsided, then comes the time to know what is within. We are beginning to know ourselves. We are discovering our own mind.

I have no doubt in my own mind that in the East our principal characteristic is to set a high price not upon success through gaining advantage, but upon self-realisation through fulfilling our *dharma*, our ideals. Let the awakening of the East drive us consciously to discover the essential and the universal meaning in our own civilisation, to remove the debris from its path, to rescue it from its bondage of stagnation that produces impurities, to make it a great channel of communication for all human races.



Rabindranath Tagore
三月廿一日
作



By JI PEON

MAN AND WOMAN

J. Evola

Translated from the Italian by Zlata Llamas Toomaraswamy.

[Amongst the many works of the Italian philosopher, J. Evola, *Rivolta contra il mondo moderno*¹ ("Revolt against the modern world"), in which is the chapter entitled "Uomo e Donna" translated below, is perhaps the most significant. Evola's "Revolt" is, fundamentally, a statement of the universal metaphysical doctrine which has given their form to traditional social institutions : and as such it deals with the social hierarchy ("caste"), the significance of kingship and empire, the relationship of the sexes, the mystery of rites, and from the same point of view interprets history and makes a devastating criticism of the pretensions of modern "civilisation". The book is not without its defects : in particular, it over-emphasizes the importance of the kingship in relation to the priesthood (*kṣatra* in relation to *brahma*, *rājā* in relation to *brāhman*), even misinterpreting Indian texts in support of its thesis in this respect² : and what is quite out of place in a work of this kind, in which the "serenity" of the heroic type is so rightly stressed, it displays a definitely antisemitic bias, as may be seen (in the translation) in the needless characterisation of Freud as a Jew.

This is, nevertheless, a remarkable presentation and exposition of traditional doctrine, and might well serve as a primer for the student of anthropology and as a guidebook for the Indologist ; especially for one who concerns himself with Indian mythology, and who has not realised that, as Evola expresses it, "the transition from mythology to 'religion' represents a humanistic decadence." "Man and Woman" has been chosen for translation because of its clear and uncompromising, and we may add, poignant statement of the principles that are reflected in institutions and ideals, such as that of *satī*, that are often no longer even comprehensible to, and are

1. Milan, Ulricho Hoepli, 1984.

2. We refer especially to the citation (p. 105) of the "marital" *rājñāḥ purohita-varaṇa-mantram* with which the Purohita takes the King to be his consort, saying, "I am heaven, thou art earth", etc. (*Āitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII. 27) : Evola, inverting the roles of King and Priest, makes out that it is with these words that the king addresses the Purohita elect, and accordingly that it is for the Priest to obey the King ! The true relationships were recognized by the older Sanskritists (Oldenberg, for example), by Guénon in *Autorité spirituelle et Pouvoir temporelle*, by Hocart in *Les Castes*, and will be further discussed in a forthcoming article on various aspects of the Indian Kingship.

certainly no longer cherished even as memories by, our politicians and reformers who, whether "by force or consent, have been led into accepting the standards of the west."¹

A. K. Coomaraswamy.]

MAN AND WOMAN*

We propose to expound briefly the meaning and the relationship of the sexes in the traditional life.

We find here in the world of tradition a correspondence of reality to symbols and of activities to rites. In these correspondences are to be found the traces of the principles in accordance with which we shall be able to understand the significance of the sexes and of the relations between them that are inevitably met with in every normal order of civilisation.

In traditional symbolism, the supernatural principle has always been conceived as "masculine"; nature and becoming as "feminine". In Greek terms, the monad (*to en*), that which "is in itself", complete and sufficient, is male: while the dyad, the principle of diversity and of the "other than self", the source of desire and motion, is female. In Hindu (*Sāṃkhya*) terms,

1. The words of Marco Pallis in his *Peaks and Lamas*, 1939, p. 422. We take the opportunity to recommend this volume, in which the most urgent problems are discussed with a rare and admirable wisdom.

* Commended by Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, we gladly introduce the above paper to our readers. The fact of our publishing it, however, must not be taken as an indication of our endorsement of the author's thesis which, however scholarly and mentally stimulating, seems to us to carry the idealisation of traditional customs and attitudes to fantastic length. The proof of the pudding is in its eating; and no amount of intellectual idealisation by European philosophers will blind us to the intolerable indignity and suffering to which some outworn traditions have condemned large sections of our own society. It may be that different or contrary ideals of conduct have led to much distortion of social life in the West, but the fault lies at least as much with the irresponsible pursuit of those ideals as with the nature of those ideals themselves. All ideals, we believe, are capable of demoralising, if those who practise them have no inner sense of moral balance. We are therefore unable to sympathise either with the author's aggressive vindication of our outworn oriental ideals or with his vehement condemnation of those of his own society. It would be interesting to compare the present paper with the one preceding it in the same issue of this Journal, which sets forth Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's attitude to eastern and western ideals of conduct.—*Editor*.

the impassible spirit (*puruṣa*) is male, and *prakṛiti*, the active matrix of every conditioned form, is female. In the Far-Eastern tradition the cosmic duality of Yang and Yin expresses the equivalent concept, so that *yang*, the male principle, is connected with the "virtue of heaven" and the *yin*, the female principle, with that of "earth".¹

Considered in themselves, the two principles cannot be represented otherwise than as opposites. But in the plan of that "triumphant" order that we have so often spoken of as the soul of the traditional world, and which we shall also recognize in its historical development in connection with the conflict of various races and civilisations, they are transformed into the elements of a creative synthesis, in which each still retains its own distinctive function. This is not the place to demonstrate that behind the formulations of the myth of the "Fall" there is often hidden the concept of the merging and loss of the male in the female principle, if not of a passing over from the one mode of being to the other.² Actually, when this happens, when that which by its very nature has its principle in itself, is enflamed by the force of "desire," and is subjected to the law of that which has no principle in itself, it is clear that we can only speak of a "Fall".³ And just here, on plane of human reality, is founded the pose of distrust and rejection of so many traditional teachings about woman, who is often considered as the principle of "sin", impurity and evil, and as a perennial temptation by

1. It is especially taught in the philosophy of the Sung dynasty, that heaven "generates" men, and earth women; and accordingly that the woman should be subject to the man as the earth is subject to heaven (cf. Plath, *Religion der alten Chinesen*, I. p. 87).

2. See, in this connection, Evola, *La Tradizione Ermetica*, pp. 88 ff., and *L'Uomo come Potenza*, pp. 77 ff.

3. It is in this sense that (as so often formulated in the Brāhmaṇas) Prajāpati, desiring to be many, and seduced by his own reflection, begets his offspring (*prajāḥ sṛjate*), and is therewith "unstrung" or "falls down", so that he has to be "reconstituted" by the Sacrifice, in which the Sacrificer at the same time "reconstitutes" himself; and in this sense also that the Sun is called "of inglorious aspect" when he puts on the woman's robes RV. X. 85. 80. (Tr.).

which the supernatural is subverted, and thus as a dangerous and solvent essence.

Apart from the "Fall", one can invoke the other possibility, that of the true relationship. There is, in fact, no degradation when the feminine principle, the very nature of which is that of relativity to another, is related to that other not as to something ever elusive, but as to an impassible masculine sufficiency. In this case there is a limit.¹ Then the "stability" is participated in, and so much so, indeed, as to effect an intimate transformation of every feminine possibility. Such are the terms of a synthesis in the positive sense, so often implied in certain aspects of the traditional symbol of the androgyne.² What happens then is a "conversion" (*parāvṛitti*) of the feminine principle, so complete that it exists entirely for the opposite principle, which remains absolutely and integrally what it is. Then—in the metaphysical symbolism—the woman becomes the "bride" who is also the "potentiality" (*śakti*), the efficient generative power that receives the first principle of motion and form from the immobile male, in accordance with the above-mentioned doctrine of the *śakti*, a doctrine that recurs in Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophy, where it is stated in other terms. It is emphasized, too, in the Tibetan Tantric symbolic representations, very significant in this respect, in which the male "who holds the sceptre" (*vajra-dhāra*) is a motionless, glistening and luminous essence, while the Śakti who embraces him and whose axis he is, is of the substance of moving flame.³

1. This may be understood in the mathematical sense, in which a "limit" is "a fixed value or form to which a varying value or form may according to the law of its variation be brought and kept (during all following stages of variation) close at will" (Webster). (Tr.).

2. E. g. in the concept and iconography of the Śaiva *ardhanārī*, the syzygy Śiva-Śakti, so often compared to the coincidence of a word (the feminine element) with its meaning (the masculine element) : and as it is *in divinis*, where essence (m.) and nature (f.) are one. (Tr.).

3. In the erotic symbolism of the said traditions, the same meaning attaches to the figuration of the union of the divine pair in *viparita-maithuna*, an embrace in which the male is motionless and it is the *śakti* that moves.

These are meanings that we have already and repeatedly set forth : but it is in this way that the basis for the traditional norm for the sexes is expressed concretely. This norm obeys the intrinsic principle of caste, with particular reference to the two pivots of *dharmā* and *bhakti* or fidelity.

If birth itself is not an accident, still less can it be—within the species—by accident that one assumes spontaneously the body of a man or that of a woman. Moreover, the physically different conception corresponds to a spiritual differentiation ; so that one is only a man or a woman physically because one is such transcendently, and the sexual characterisation, far from being spiritually irrelevant, is the significant sign of a way to be followed and of a distinct vocation (*dharmā*). We know that the will to order and to “form” is the spirit of every traditional civilisation ; that what is true traditionally is not directed towards the uncharacterised, the identical, or the indefinite—in which the various parts of a whole are promiscuously and automatically unified—but to the making of each element ever more and more itself, ever more and more expressive of its own special nature. So, in the special case of the sexes, man and woman are presented as two types, and whoever is born as a man should be fulfilled as a man, and a woman as woman, in and in relation to all things, without admixture or promiscuity : and even as regards their supernatural goal, man and woman have each their own path, and these paths cannot be interchanged without involving a perverse and inorganic manner of being.

We have already considered the manner of being that is eminently appropriate to the man ; and have already spoken of the two main forms in which the limits of being in itself, far from being confused, are realised : the forms of Action and of Contemplation. The Warrior (Hero) and the Ascetic are, then, the two fundamental types of pure virility or manhood. Corresponding to these are the two forms of the feminine nature. The woman realises herself as such, she rises to the level of the man as Ascetic or as Warrior, insofar as she is either Lover or

Mother. As there is an active heroism, so there is a negative heroism, and these are the two sides of one and the same ideal concept ; there is the heroism of absolute affirmation, and that of absolute dedication, and the one can be as luminous as the other, the one as much as the other may bear the fruit of victory and freedom, when they are lived in purity, and given the significance of a "sacrificial" offering. It is just these differentiations of the heroic concept that determine the distinctive characteristics of the ways proper to man and to woman thought of as types. To the act of the warrior and the ascetic, accomplished in the one case by pure action and in the other by detachment, whereby these are established in a life beyond mere living, there corresponds in the woman the heroism of total self-surrender to another being, of existence altogether for the sake of another being—whether a beloved man (if she be Lover), or a child (if she be Mother)—in which she finds the meaning of her own life, her own delight and her own justification. It is just in this way that *bbakti* or *fidelity* is for the traditional woman her normal and natural way of participation in the "formal" order (*rūpa loka*), or even if the way be followed absolutely and super-individually, of participation in what lies beyond the realm of "form" (*arūpa loka*). To realise oneself, to become what one is ever more and more decisively in accordance with these two distinct and entirely different ways, reducing in the woman all that is male and in the man all that is female—such is the traditional law of the sexes, on every plane of life.¹

Thus it is traditionally *only mediately* through self-devotion to another, to a man, that the woman can participate in the sacred hierarchical order. In India, the woman, even of high

1. In this connection it may be remarked, what is very significant, even amongst the primitives, the traditional separation of groups of men only in the so-called "men's houses", the preliminary stage of a virile differentiation that is completed and made final by rites of initiation from which the woman is excluded and which once and for all liberate the individual concerned from all feminine tutelage and introduce him to new forms of life and to new laws. Cf. H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies : a Study in early Politics and Religion*.

caste, has no initiatory lore of her own,¹ she does not belong to the sacred body of the aristocracy, the Ārya, except through her father until she is married, and then through her husband, who is moreover the mystical head of the family². In Rome, conformably to a related type of spirituality, the woman, far from being the "peer" or "companion" of her husband, was legally his daughter—*filiae loco*—and the sister of her own sons—*sororis loco*; from childhood she was subject to the father's power, who was himself leader and priest of his family: as a wife she was, as they crudely expressed it, as if a "thing in the man's hand". Such traditional formulations of the absolute dependence of the woman are, of course, to be met with elsewhere,³ and do not imply any such violence or insolence as might be supposed by the so-called free spirits of today, but serve to establish the boundaries and the natural place of the only kind of spiritual life that conforms to the purely feminine nature.

Here we can affirm, also, those ancient views in which there is expressed precisely the pure type of the traditional woman, that of one who is capable of a sacrifice extending to the limits of the human and the more than human. We have already

1. This does not mean that a woman cannot be initiated, or cannot initiate as is clear from the *mānavadharmasūtra* II. 145 (Tr.).

2. Cf. S  nart, *Les Castes dans l'Inde*, p. 68; *M  navadharmas  tra*, IX. 166, cf. V. 155, "There are no sacrifices, rites or fasts specifically for women; she who hears her husband (as a pupil a master's teaching) will be magnified in heaven". We cannot pause to deal here with the meaning of a feminine priesthood, and to explain in what way it is not really contradictory of the idea just expressed: such a priesthood is always traditionally a lunar priesthood; rather than being a deviation, this involved that possibility of the feminine vocation in which the personality is wholly naughted, and replaced, for example, by the voice of an oracle of a god. Further on, we shall have something to say about the perversion of tradition characteristic of a civilisation of decadence, in which the feminine-lunar element usurps the hierarchical supremacy.

3. In the same way we read in ancient China, in the *Niu-kie-tsie-pien* (V): "When a woman goes from her father's to her husband's house, she abandons everything, even her name. She no longer possesses property; what she has, and what she brings, her own person, all belong to him to whom she is given as wife"—and in the *Niu-hien-shu* it is emphasized that in her house the woman should be "like a shadow and a mere echo" (cited in S. Trovatielli, *Le civilt   e le legislazioni dell'antico Oriente*, Bologna 1890, pp. 157-158).

referred to the Aztec tradition in which only those mothers who have died in childbirth¹ share the privilege of a divine immortality, the privilege of the military aristocracy: for death in childbirth was envisaged as a sacrifice and as a heroism equal to his who fell on the field of battle. We can point to another case, that of the type of the Hindu woman, who is a woman to the inmost, to the utmost of sensuality, but lives entirely by a silent and devoted faith, by which power that which she offered, and which was already manifested in the erotic dedication of her body, person and will, culminated in another very different and far from sensual offering, that in which the wife gave up her life in the flames of the Aryan funeral pyre, to follow on high the deceased to whom she had been given. This traditional sacrifice—nothing but a “barbarity” in the eyes of our so heroic Europeans—in which the widow was burnt together with the body of her dead husband, is called in Sanskrit *satī*, a word deriving from root *as* and the stem *sat*, to “be”, whence comes also *satya*, “truth,” and meaning also “gift”, “loyalty” and “love”.² *Satī* was, then, conceived as the supreme culmination of the relations between the sexes, the absolute relation between them on the plane of truth and superhumanly.³ Here the value of the man is raised to that of the support of a liberating *bhakti*

1. Cf. Réville, *Religion de Mexique*, etc., p. 190.

2. Cf. G. de Lorenzo, *Oriente et Occidente*, Bari, 1931, p. 72. Analogous customs are met with amongst old Aryan races, other than the Indian; amongst the Thracians, Greeks, Scythians and Slavs (cf. C. Clemen, *Religionsgeschichte Europas*, Heidelberg, 1926, V. I. p. 218). (For *satī* in the Celtic and Scandinavian traditions see Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Śiva*, New York, 1924 p. 91 f., cf. Coomaraswamy and Daud, *Burning and Melting*, London 1912—Tr.). In the American Inca civilisation the suicide of a widow in order to follow her husband was not established by law, it was merely the usual thing, and a woman who had not the courage to carry it out, or thought that she had reasons for not doing so, was looked down upon (cf. Réville, *op. cit.*, p. 374).

3. Transcendental parallels may be remarked in SB. X. 4.1.5f. where Indra (representing the Regnum, and as such feminine) and Agni (representing the Spiritual Power, and as such masculine) are not effectively a syzygy (*maithuna*) until both are kindled in one flame, which is Agni's: and in RV. X. 189.2 where in connection with the swallowing up of the “Dawn” by the “Sun”, we find “When he suspires, she expires, and he shines forth throughout the sky” (Tr.).

and love becomes a way, a door. It was, in fact, the traditional doctrine that the woman who followed her husband on the pyre, followed him to heaven : she was transformed into the husband's very substance ;¹ she participated in that "triumphal" and "heroic" transfiguration by the "burning" of the body of flesh to a heavenly body of light, of which in the Aryan civilisation the cremation of the material body was only the symbol.²

We have already indicated as the essential of *bhakti* an indifference to the nature of the object or material of the action or relation involved : "purity" of action,³ purity of disposition. This may make it easier to understand how in a traditional civilisation such as the Indian, the ritual sacrifice—*satī*—of the widow can be a sanctioned institution. For the truth is that when a woman gives and sacrifices herself only because she is linked to another being by a very strong and reciprocal chain of human passion, this still pertains to the category of merely private feeling ; and it is only when the dedication can be ruled and evolved *without a support* that it acquires a transcendent value. When a woman in a given case follows her husband's body to the flames because of human love, this is still no more than a romantic and "emotional" episode, which could be treated as a literary theme ; the traditional law of *satī*, absolute and irrespective of particular cases, indifferent to and unaffected by the consent or dissent of the "feelings" is, on the contrary, a superior, real and great thing.

In Islam we find like meanings in the institution of the harem. For the "civilised", if a woman renounces all outer life and lives for ever enclosed, she does so always in devotion to God, and even so this happens only by exception. In Islam a

1. Cf. *Mānavadharmasāstra* IX. 29 : "She who never wrongs her husband and whose thoughts, speech and body are controlled attains to her husband's world" after death.

2. Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* VI. 2. 14. "When he dies, then they carry him to the fire . . . From this oblation the person is regenerated, having the hue of light", i. e. in a "body of glory".

3. An action is "pure" that is performed without self-referent motives,—the "action without attachment" of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (Tr.).

man has sufficed for this, and the walls of the harem were a natural thing that no well-born woman would have dreamed of discussing : it appeared quite natural for a woman to centre the whole of her own life upon a man from whom she did not by any means demand love, and whom she loved in such a profound and un-individual way as even to allow other women to participate in the same feelings, to be bound by the same chain and the same dedication. It is just at this point that there emerges the characteristic of that "purity" that is essential to the Way of which we are speaking. Love that lays down conditions and asks for a return of love and a dedication on the man's part is of an altogether inferior order. On the other hand, a man who is entirely a man cannot know love in this sense¹ without feminising himself and thus declining from that very internal sufficiency because of which the woman is able to find in him a support that exalts her self-abandonment. In the myth, Śiva, thought of as the great ascetic of the mountains, with a single glance reduces Kāma, the God of Love, to ashes, when the latter tries to awaken passion for his consort Pārvatī in him. And there is truly grandeur in a woman when there is a giving without seeking, a flame self-nourished. Now there is much of this in the spirit of the harem : there is a superiority to jealousy and thus to egoistic passion and the idea of a possession on the woman's part, from whom there is asked a cloistered dedication from her awakening in girlhood until death, as well as an absolute fidelity to one who may also have other women as his own, possessing all without being in love

1. That is, of course, "cannot love a woman in this sense" : for man can and should love God in this way, and feel towards him a *bhakti* in the same way as a woman ; and this is even in accordance with the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the natural Way of the hero and the warrior. If the idea of a self-surrender and a self-denial (in the most literal sense of the words) propounded as the Way for woman seems to modern mentalities "unfair", it should be remembered that for the East as for Christianity, "all" creation is feminine to God, Who is unattainable by anyone who still is anyone ; and that here too, if there are many "brides", there is only one "bridegroom". Man, as the object of a woman's love, is the *symbol* of God as the final object of all love. And if we ask—in either case—"What is love?" the answer is always the same, "Thou shalt know when thou becomest me" (Tr.).

with any. It is precisely in this "inhuman" situation that there is asceticism, heroism, and what may well be called holiness.¹ Whereby there is seen to be created something glowing, a true possession, a superiority—and even a liberation: for in the presence of a faith so absolute and unconditional the man, in his human aspect, is nothing but a means, and there is evoked already the possibility of a supra-terrestrial order. As the rule of the harem follows that of convents, so the Islamic law for woman raises her, in accordance with the possibilities of her own nature, which do not exclude but rather embrace the life of the senses, to the very plane of monastic asceticism.²

We are naturally not considering in this or any other case the material level to which the harem, or any other institution determined by a like spirituality, can be reduced. We are considering what in it answers to the pure traditional idea, that is to say the higher possibility of which such institutions are always susceptible, in accordance with their principle. It is, we repeat, the function of tradition to dig deep channels, in order

1. It is prescribed in the *Mānavadharmasāstra* not only that a woman should never take the initiative, but should be in the charge of father, husband or son, as the case may be (V. 147-8 ; IX. 8) but it is also said (V. 154) that "however the husband's conduct may be wrong, and though he may follow after another love and may be without virtue, she must still always reverence him as a divinity".

(The husband is honoured as such, not as the individual so-and-so : it is as husband, and not as so-and-so that he is a divinity, or a symbol. The situation is precisely the same as it is with the Catholic priest, whose private failings are his own misfortune, and do not in any way affect the efficacy of his ministration : Tr.)

2. Cf. M. d'Arle, *Difesa della donna Islamica* (Defence of the Islamic woman), Torre, 1930, No. 8. It may be remarked in this connection that the sacrificial offering of the senses and even of virginity is a strictly established form in what is yet another occasion of scandal to the moderns : in the "sacred prostitution" that was practised in the ancient Syrian, Lycian, Lydian and Theban Egyptian temples, etc. The woman was expected to make the first offering of her person not because of a passionate emotion felt for a given man ; she was required to give herself to the first man who should, within the sacred precincts, offer a coin, of whatever value ; to give herself as a sacrifice and an offering to the Goddess. It was only after this ritualistic offering of her body that she could be married. Herodotus (I. 199) remarks significantly that once she has returned to her home, "he may offer (to the girl who is now a woman) an exorbitant sum : but she will have nothing more to do with him"—a sufficient proof in itself of how little all these things have to do with any "corruption" or with "prostitution". Here the women were called the

that the chaotic currents of life may flow therein in the right direction. They are the *free* who accept this traditional direction : not those for whom it is a thing imposed from without, but those in whom it develops spontaneously and who find themselves in it, so that they follow the higher, the "traditional" possibility as if by an interior motion. Others who follow these institutions in their material sense, but neither understand nor realise are the *saved* ; for their obedience, however lacking in illumination, bears them virtually beyond their individual limitations and puts them on the way of the former. But for those who follow the traditional channel neither in spirit nor in form, there is only chaos. They are the *lost*, they are the fallen.

Such is the case of the moderns in this question of woman. It was, forsooth, impossible that a world that had "risen above" caste, and that had restored (to use terms of demagogic slang) to men their "dignity" and "rights", could have retained the smallest sense of the right relationship of the sexes. Woman's "emancipation" inevitably followed that of the slave and the glorification of those who have neither status nor tradition, the pariahs, in other words. In a society that no longer knows either Ascetic or Warrior ; in a society in which the hands of the latter-day aristocrats seem to have been made for a tennis racket rather than for a spade or a sceptre ; in a society in which—when it is not the plaster mask of the "intellectual" or the "professor", the narcissistic puppet "artist", or the officious and underhanded machination of the banker and politician—the type of the "real man" is represented by the boxer and the cowboy. In such a

"pure (*kadistu*), or the "holy (*kadesha*) ones affianced to the God". Their respective laws record the like of the Roman and Aztec Vestals, and so does the rule of the mediaeval convent. Other aspects of the institution are referred to by Mereskovski (*Les Mystères de l'Orient*, Paris. 1927, p. 168) as follows : "A least once in life every human being is subjected to the event of birth and death : once at least every man should be joined to a woman and every woman to a man, but not simply in order to beget and in due course to die. When the man (throwing down his money) says, 'I call upon Mylitta', the woman is Mylitta for him." (It is from this point of view that the Indian institution of the Devadāsī, the "Handmaid of God", whom the Europeanised Indians speak of as a "temple prostitute", should be understood. Tr.)

society it was natural that woman too should be uplifted, and should demand a "personality" and a freedom of her own, in the animal, anarchic and individualistic sense of the present day. And where the traditional ethic required of man and woman to be evermore themselves, to express evermore emphatically that which makes the one a man and the other a woman, lo and behold, the new tendencies strive towards the informal, towards a stage that is by no means beyond, but rather below that of the individuation and differentiation of the sexes.

And we mistake an abdication for a conquest. After centuries of "slavery"—it is said—the woman wanted to be free, wanted to live for her own sake. But this so-called "feminism" could not beget for the woman a personality otherwise than in imitation of the masculine personality, and so it is that the new woman's "victories" conceal a fundamental self-betrayal, her impotence to be and to have value as what she is : woman and not man. At the same time, the kind of man that feminism had in view was nothing but an artificial man, the gigolo of modern society ; and accordingly, it was easy for feminism to show that woman possessed virtually, and to a greater or less degree, the same rational and practical faculties that made up the elements of the artificial man and which, in such a diabolical fashion, have been made the basis of the rights, the autonomy and the "superiority" of the modern virile type. The man, moreover, taking no responsibility, left things to take their course ; or rather, he helped them on, he it was that drove the woman into the streets, the business offices, the schools, the factories and all the other infected and infectious cross-roads of modern society and culture. In this way there was given the last levelling impulse.

And where the spiritual emasculation of the modern and materialised man has not thus silently restored the primacy, characteristic of every ancient gynecocratic community, of the courtesan, the mistress of men brutalised by their senses and working to serve them, the result is still a degeneration of the feminine type even in its physical features, the atrophy of its natural possibi-

lities, the suffocation of its inwardness. And hence the *garconne* type, the neuter or mannish girl, sporty, vacant, incapable of any impulse beyond herself, incapable—at last—even of sensuality or sinfulness : so that in the case of the modern woman we do not even mention the possibility of maternity, but only that of a mere physical love in which she does not feel even so much interest as she does in beautifying herself, in displaying herself as much or as little dressed as possible, in physical training, dance, sport, money and so forth. Already, Europe knows very little of the purity of an offering and a fidelity that gives all and asks nothing ; of a love so all-sufficing as to have no need to be exclusive. Apart from a purely conventional bourgeois faithfulness, the love that Europe approves is one that cannot tolerate in the beloved anything but a return of love. Now when the woman who consecrates herself to him at the same time claims that the man belongs to her, body and soul, she has already not merely humanised and degraded her offering, but far more than this, she has begun to betray the pure essence of her own femininity by borrowing here again a mode of being that pertains to the masculine nature—at its lowest : possession, rights over others, pride in self. Then all the rest follows, and as happens in every Fall, in accordance with a law of acceleration. The woman, indeed, who makes pretension to own one man is naturally the same as the one who will end by an extension of the claim to the possession of more than one. In a subsequent stage, with a heightened egocentrism, she will no longer take any interest in men at all, except to the extent that they can serve her pleasure or her vanity. And finally she cannot have enough of animality, and goes on to every form of corruption and sexual exasperation, associated with utmost superficiality ; or she adopts the life of external activity of the very masculine type that stamped her in a mould and threw her into its own gutter of labour, vanity, greed, go-getting, lying and so forth.

Such are the results of western “emancipation”. The traditional woman, in giving herself, in not living for herself, in

willing to live altogether for another and to be all for another than herself, in willing to be, simply and purely, fulfilled herself, belonged to herself, and had her own heroism—essentially, she raised herself above the common level to the plane of the ascetic. The modern woman, in seeking to exist for herself, destroyed herself. Her hot pursuit of “personality” robbed her of any personality.

And under these circumstances it is easy to foresee what must become of the relations between the sexes, even in a material sense. For here, as in magnetism, the creative spark is the higher and more lively the more definite is the polarity : the more the man is truly a man and the woman truly a woman. What, on the other hand, can come of these vague creatures, divorced from all connection with the deeper forces of their own nature ? From these creatures in whom sex begins and ends in physiology, even if abnormal inclinations are not already present ? From these creatures who are psychologically neither man nor woman, if indeed the woman is not the man and the man the woman, and who boast of being above sex while in fact they are below it ? The relations between them can have no other quality than that of a plaster cast, a virtually homosexual anodyne : can amount to no more than the promiscuity of an equivocal camaraderie, a morbid “intellectual” sympathy, the banality of a new worship of nature shared together,—if indeed they are not effectively hysterical and pathological complexes, of the kind of which the Jew Freud has built up a pseudo-science. Nothing else is possible in the world of the “emancipated” woman : and the vanguard of this world, Russia and America, is already before our eyes, sufficient evidence of what may be expected in this connection.

Now, all of this can only have its final repercussions in an order of things destined to go much farther than the moderns, in their headlong course, can have suspected.

BASIC EDUCATION AND GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

J. B. Kripalani

WHENEVER institutions become complex, over-civilised, whenever seeds of corruption enter into them, in short, when there is decadence, what happens is that the first and the primal impulse and reason that gave them birth come to be exhausted. At such times the first things cease to be first and secondary objects engross attention and monopolise interest. Our systems of education, not here alone but all over the world, have suffered from like decadence. In the beginning all knowledge proceeded from the concrete, the discrete and the real, from what could be seen and sensed. The reformer, in every field of activity, in every walk of life, has therefore to call people back to nature, back to the original and primal meaning of things. Take a very simple example of human dress, with which men and especially women decorate themselves today in what is called civilised society. How did dress first originate? It originated owing to the exigencies of the periodical changes in weather, for the protection of the human body. Today among the rich it serves the purpose of decoration, ostentation and fashion. The primal purpose has receded to the background. In food, too, we find a similar change. I am sure that if we were deprived of our clothes and food we would hanker after the coarsest clothes in order to protect our bodies from the vagaries of weather, and the plainest food for the satisfaction of our hunger. The reformer in dress and food would therefore call us back to nature, to the original and primal meaning of things.

In Hindu philosophy it is said that the world is made of *rūpa* and *nāma*, form and name. Form must come first and the name afterwards. Until and unless there are material objects and human actions there can be no names to designate them.

Names and words do not precede but follow things. But in our educational system, we have inverted this natural order and put names and general terms first and objects afterwards. We are taught through words and phrases and general ideas. We have allowed children but a passing acquaintance with things, with concrete nature and its processes. We are not prepared to make them wait upon Nature patiently but are in a hurry to teach by means of words, forgetting that all human knowledge has its basis in the concrete, in observation and experiment. •

When Gandhiji first announced his new reform the learned who had acquired their knowledge in the orthodox way by means of words and phrases, were up against the scheme. They could not understand how all that they had painfully acquired through words could be got through the instrumentality of Nature and craft work. I cannot blame the learned for this failure to understand Gandhiji. They have to deal here with a unique and, if I may say so, a queer personality. Gandhiji is so intensely in a hurry for the practical that he forgets to approach a problem through systematic theoretical study and exposition, which alone the educated of today can understand and appreciate. He does not proceed in the manner of the learned ; he writes no thesis giving elaborate argument for the proposition he places before the nation. With his gifted imagination he sees his new schemes as in a picture. With the briefest introduction he announces his reforms. We are not invited to witness the process of his thought. If therefore the learned misunderstood Gandhiji they cannot be much blamed. They fell unconscious victims to the peculiar trick of his genius.

A reformer brought up in the intellectual atmosphere of modern Europe and America, if he had for instance to advocate a new system of education, would have given us a brief history of education, tracing the beginnings of knowledge as it arises in primitive societies. He would have described the developments of all forms of knowledge, scientific, philosophic, political, social, ethical and spiritual. He would then have traced how knowledge,

after a particular evolution, becomes rigid, deductive and scholastic ; how it comes to be lost in the maze of words and phrases, on account of the influence of the priests and the forms created by the philosophers ; then, he would have shown how reformers like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbert, Froebel, John Dewey and others advocated and introduced reforms in the educational system ; how and to what extent their movements succeeded and to what extent they failed of their purpose and why they failed ; why it was not possible to weave education round a productive craft, and how centralised mass production in factories under the capitalist régime made this impossible. He would also have said something about the politecnisation of education in Soviet Russia. He would have ended by showing how Indian conditions favour the new experiment. He would have shown how the reform advocated was called for by the march of history ; how it was inevitable and in consonance with approved scientific theories in education. One must never forget the attachment of the educated to their theories.

Another handicap of the learned is that they suffer from what may be called the fallacy of words. For them certain words have a settled unalterable connotation. If a particular word is used there is no need to look to the reference beyond. For instance, if a person is called a capitalist or a bourgeois, a learned socialist will need no further information before dubbing him a heartless and cruel exploiter. In the same way those who are wedded to the old order, if they hear that a person is a communist, would straightway think of him as a red revolutionary waiting in ambush to destroy the social order. This tyranny of words affected our critics, when they heard that the new system was a brain-wave of Gandhiji's and had emanated from Wardha. No good could ever come from that quarter. Then what were Gandhiji's credentials for invading the field of education ? He had never been to a university, foreign or Indian. What did he know about education ? All this looked quite conclusive. No effort was therefore made to understand

and appreciate the scheme and what it stood for. If, instead of concentrating attention on Gandhiji's personality and his credentials, an effort had been made to understand the scheme there would have been a better appreciation of the new idea and, even if there had been criticism, it would have been better informed, and, therefore, constructive and fruitful.

If the learned, instead of pronouncing judgment *a priori*, had studied the scheme they would have found it natural, scientific and psychological. All knowledge proceeds from observation and experiment ; it proceeds from the concrete to the abstract, from the practical to the theoretical. First we have observation and experiment and then the general law based upon induction. After induction is complete we proceed to deduction, which again is to be verified by actual experience. All knowledge thus proceeds from the practical and must be justified by human experience.

When Gandhiji was thinking of his new scheme he was thinking of this scientific process. He was also thinking in terms of child psychology. The child finds it natural and easy to proceed from the actual and the concrete to the abstract. His tendency to action and not to thought, makes it easy for him to handle and work upon things and thus acquire knowledge. The present system of education runs counter to child psychology. Knowledge is put through the ears to be vomitted out through the mouth. I remember the many names which I was made to repeat but which I never understood until years afterwards, when I came in contact with the actual things in life. If instead from the beginning I had been taken to things, and better still had been allowed to handle and fashion things, I am sure I would have learnt quicker and better.

So much about method. If the method is natural and scientific it can suit any system of education whatever its aim. In the history of modern education in Europe and America the labour or craft method has been advocated apart from any general aim that the state or the educator had in view. It has been advocated

for an individualist and capitalist society as well as for a socialist or communist society. It has been advocated even by religious organisations. In a sense the method stands apart from any other general aim of education. We may not, however, forget that Gandhiji lighted upon this method in connection with the rest of his philosophy of life for the individual and society. It would not therefore be out of place to review, however briefly, the philosophy of life Gandhiji advocates. It is the more necessary to do so because, if our education has suffered grievously from a defective and unscientific method, it has suffered much more from defective and unworthy ideals.

I am not caricaturing the aims of the present system when I say it was designed to produce cheap coloured administrative and clerical assistants for the white Government. If there was a worthier aim, it was, in the words of Macaulay, to produce a race of Anglo-Saxons in thought and culture who were Indians only "in the colour of their skins and the blood running in their veins". The latter under certain conceivable circumstances may even be a worthy objective if it could be achieved. The Anglo-Saxon in his own home has many lovable and laudable qualities and if Indians could be turned into coloured Anglo-Saxons there may be some point in the effort. But the object is not possible of accomplishment, as a century of Anglo-Saxon education has demonstrated. The educated Indian has become Anglo-Saxon only in certain not very desirable directions. He has left behind him some of the good qualities of his ancestors and adopted instead some doubtful ways of his masters. There may be honourable exceptions but they are few and far between. However, it was unthinkable that the masses of India could ever be anglicized even in this vulgar sense of the term. The only result has been that the educated Indian has been effectively cut off from the mass of his countrymen and the little knowledge he has painfully acquired through the medium of foreign tongue is confined to himself and never filters down to them. An unbridgeable gulf has been created between him

and them. This gulf would have gone on widening but for the national movement which has tried to bring the classes and the masses together by giving them a common goal to strive for. If therefore it is necessary to change the method in education it is perhaps even more necessary to provide it with worthy and noble ideals.

To understand the philosophy of a reformer like Gandhiji, it is necessary to view it against the historical background. Only so can one fully evaluate and appreciate the changes he proposes to bring about in the present order of things.

The aim of history is to change the natural man into a moral or spiritual man and make him a member of a moral or spiritual society. What is the moral individual? Various definitions may be given from various viewpoints. But few will quarrel with me when I say that a moral or a spiritual person is a free person. He is free not in the sense that he might do any and everything he pleases. That would be the freedom of the Blond Beast. Human freedom cannot be thought of apart from human responsibility. The moral man combines free choice with due restraint, and liberty with responsibility. To attain to this end he must be a member of an appropriate moral society. The march of history has been ever trying to bring about this integrated result.

Humanity began with strife and violence, combined with natural cunning. Life was precarious and uncertain. Humanity somehow moved out of this chaotic condition; it organised itself into families, clans and tribes; later into castes, classes, countries and nations. Some kind of social arrangement with some sort of order and equity was introduced. War and violence were pushed back a little. Yet these early societies were created through war and violence. Powerful individuals and classes imposed their will and law upon those whom they had subdued and conquered. Every social group was therefore divided between masters and slaves, rulers and ruled, kings and subjects, patricians and plebians, barons and bondmen. If the group was

internally divided, externally it was at war with every other group. Yet even this unjust and violent order that repudiated the idea of oneness and equality was an advance on the previous disorder. For the law that might alone is right was partially modified. In such societies the kings were divine with some justification because they had established some sort of order and justice in a section of humanity. This was a moral gain. For we must remember that any kind of order that makes some kind of civilised life possible is better than no order, better than chaos, unless disorder and chaos are temporary or the necessary price to be paid for a better and higher order.

However, this society could not satisfy the urge for fraternity, equality and justice in individuals of exceptional moral and spiritual sensitiveness. They felt within themselves the call for a higher order of goodness, justice and love. How were their aspirations to identify themselves with all human life to be fulfilled? A society that was divided between masters and slaves could not satisfy this inner need. When, therefore, the urge came on them, they renounced life and stood far from the madding crowd and ploughed their lonely furrow to realise their ideals. They became introverts and left the world with all its concerns. Thus it was that Buddha renounced the world. Thus it was that Christ, despairing of establishing God's kingdom on earth, was constrained to declare that his kingdom was not of this world but of the other world. When these reformers preached their faith they preached it to individuals for their individual emancipation and salvation. Buddha, when he attained the light, said that he would like to be born again and again, so long as there was even one soul left who had not attained salvation. He could think of humanity only as a collection of separate individuals. He had no ambition to change the face of things here and now.

The example and precept of the masters did affect social relations but to a very slight degree and that indirectly. For the rest there was a cleavage between the religious life on the one hand and the material and social life on the other.

The best spirits had to renounce the world and its concerns as so much *maya* or the weariness of the flesh. Buddha preached his non-violence to kings and princes, but for their individual life and salvation. The Christian church exempted political leaders and organisers from the full obligation of the law of universal love and charity as preached by the master. The most non-violent sect of the Jains freed kings and princes from the full implications of the doctrine of Ahimsa; but to none of these kings and rulers was individual salvation denied. Thus society that was divided between masters and slaves came to be further divided between those who followed the way of the world and those who renounced the world and followed the way of the Lord. Only thus could the latter attain to the freedom, equality and love whose possibility was denied in external organised society and its relations. Though they failed to mould social, political and economic relations after their hearts, they proved beyond all doubt the moral worth of the individual and his freedom from external cramping circumstances. They stood as high peaks on the plane dead level of life. This too was a great gain for humanity.

The tyranny and injustice in organised society, however, went on apace, till the average man roused himself from the age-long slumbers and asserted himself against his masters. This struggle established what is known as democracy. Democracy asserts the moral worth of the individual in society and stresses his equality. It also puts an end, at least in theory, to the political exploitation of the individual. Democracy ends violence inside a group. Matters are decided not by cutting heads but by counting them. Each head stands for one. Democracy also provides for alternate rule and obedience. It makes for liberty informed with responsibility. Thus democracy is a moral and spiritual principle on the material and political plane. May it not be therefore that even the wage slaves of democratic countries, "who have only their chains to lose," refuse to accept the totalitarian communist order as a solvent of their difficulties ?

They have with pain and travail attained to political equality which guarantees them their dignity as individuals. They are loth to risk their new-found freedom by a revolution whose fruits and rewards are uncertain.

If the new-found democratic principle in the politics of the nations had been allowed free scope to develop itself, it might have saved nations from internal conflicts and helped to establish in course of time an integrated and unified social order. It might have progressively moralised society. In such a society, it may not have been necessary to seek the forest or the walls of a monastery for one's highest fulfilment as an individual. But society's progress is never in a straight line. The path is zigzag. There is advance and regress. Even as humanity discovered democracy, it came by the discovery of steam, electricity and other forces of nature. These, with the discovery of new lands, ushered in the industrial revolution and the modern empire. It will be a long story to recount the changes brought on by these new forces. They are not complete even today. Whatever good the industrial revolution did, there is no doubt that it very nearly destroyed the gains of democracy. It produced the old divisions and inequalities on a different plane—the economic plane. It divided society into haves and have-nots, masters of the machine and the wage-slaves; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In such a society the democratic vote that asserts the dignity of man became a sham and a mockery. We had therefore again the old contradictions but now removed from the political to the economic field. As political power formerly ensured economic competence, now economic powers ensured political power. There was again the same spectacle of moral man in immoral society.

Some other principle besides democracy was to be introduced if humanity was to be saved. The new need was economic. Therefore the principle of economic equality was discovered and we had the cult of socialism. Socialism proclaims the equality of man in the economic field. As such it is a moral and a spiritual principle. But in asserting it, its advocates pronounced it as

merely a material principle and possible only in a society where all moral and spiritual values were abolished. They pitched the new principle against that of democracy. Modern socialism born in the age of science and mechanised and centralised big industry could not divest itself of its swaddling clothes. Its advocates confused capitalism with democracy, forgetting all the while that capitalism had done the greatest injury to the democratic principle by abolishing the free and responsible individual. The new principle was asserted at the expense of the old gain of humanity. Also capitalism with all its attendant evils was confused with the principle of the freedom of the individual. Therefore the remedy discovered was not only to abolish the ill-regulated and chaotic individuality but individuality itself. For the Marxist the individual is but the ensemble of social relations. The remedy proposed is worse than the disease. It abolishes the patient along with the malady. Of course, it was not easy to justify theoretically this abolition of the individual. We were therefore promised a resurrection of the individual, after the advent of the Marxian revolution. Those who had ceased to believe in spiritual resurrection assured us of the same, on the material plane.

We see the new principle of Socialism at work in Russia, which has established some sort of equality in the economic sphere. But economic equality has been heavily paid for by the curtailment of individual initiative and liberty. Naturally, because for the new creed the individual apart from society does not exist. In this, as in many other things, communism and fascism are at one with each other. The latter thinks of the individual as a cell in the national or racial body politic; the former thinks of him as a cell in a collective world proletariat. Till the world proletariat gets united and comes to its own the individual in Russia is as much a cell in the body politic of Russia as the individual in Germany or Italy. The individual, both in the fascist and communist countries, is free even as a cell in the human body is free, to work out the will of the superior organisation. He can have no life or will of his own.

The bolshevic equality in the economic field is built upon big, centralised and mechanised industry and agriculture. This centralisation naturally affects the political field also. The result is bureaucratic rule. The holders of power may not directly enjoy undue economic advantages (and that is so in Italy and Germany too), but then office gives them advantages which have their economic value. Apart from this there is nothing to check the pride of power. External checks are no doubt important but they cannot go far enough, to the root of things in the egoistic self-regard of man. Certain positions in the body politic would always be more important than others. If we take away the moral compulsion, there is nothing to prevent the pride and therefore the tyranny of power and position. The earlier monarchies, aristocracies and dictatorships operated within certain narrow limits, and left spheres of autonomous action untouched by authority. Such spheres of autonomy are effectively annihilated under communism, as we know it. So the position in this respect is much worse than under democracies.

The much-talked-of local self-government in Russia exists more in theory than in practice. When all industry, commerce and agriculture, when the whole life of society is organised on a national scale, the local units can have but little voice in the shaping of the new order ; local units would naturally lack the necessary information and skill. All this was more than plain in the process of the liquidation of the kulaks. The proof of political liberty is in the treatment meted out to the authors of the revolution under the Stalin régime. The present foreign policy of Russia conclusively illustrates the part that local units play in the moulding of high state politics. In international politics Russian diplomacy has proved itself as tortuous as the diplomacy of capitalist and fascist countries. The principle of open diplomacy, as every other principle which we were assured would usher in the millenium, has gone by the board. Yet all these things stand justified for the faithful. The result is nothing to be wondered at when one remembers that moral considerations have no

relevance in the solution of the problems communism has placed before itself.

Modern democracy came in simultaneously with the advance of scientific research. The latter pushed aside moral and spiritual considerations. Democracy under such circumstances became a mere organisational political device. The freedom of the individual divested of moral responsibility introduced a chaotic element. The confusion thus created was worse confounded with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. The only nexus binding free men was the nexus of the legal contract. If this legal contract sent the weakest to the wall, it was all the triumph of the scientific principle of the survival of the fittest. If people had only their self-interest at heart the resultant self-interest will, by some kind of alchemy, turn into altruism. Instead of man being the full warm-blooded individual that he is, he became an economic man. Marxism turned him into an ensemble of social relations.

Only recently when the principle of democracy was felt to be in great danger, its advocates have dimly begun to realise that it is not merely a political device but a great moral and spiritual principle. It is now felt that the abandonment of this principle would spell regress for humanity. It is also being realised that not only the democratic but the socialist principle is a moral principle. Both are meant to assert the dignity of man on the material plane. If these principles are not to remain mere forms without content, they must be established in the social, political and the economic fields.

It is this that Gandhiji proposes to do by his philosophy of life. He believes in the moral origin and destiny of man. This destiny has got to be worked out by the average man and woman in a moral society. The individual and the social, the inner and the external life, must be informed and guided by principles of non-violence, truth and justice. That this may be so, it is necessary that in social, political and economic relations, the means must be as pure as the ends. If it does not benefit a man to

lose his soul to gain the whole world, it does not likewise benefit a nation to gain the whole world and lose its soul. Moral society must have its appropriate external, social, political and economic institutions. In the arrangements of these, Gandhiji's effort is to retain for humanity the moral and material gains of democracy and socialism. Socialism of the Marxian type by its over-centralisation and the divorce of moral principles from its means and ends, crushes the individual, however effectively it may supply him with material goods. Physically starving humanity may not care for moral ends and may for some time be satisfied with two square meals a day. But neither individuals nor society can live for long by bread alone. They must have other and higher aims without being deprived of the physical means of well-being.

Gandhiji's advocacy of cottage and village industry, along with decentralised agriculture and commerce, is to cure the excess of centralisation of the communist order. For him, therefore, the principle of decentralisation is a moral principle. It makes for free choice in a variety of fields. It also makes possible the exercise of the individual's will over an extended area. It creates external possibilities for the formation and expression of free opinion. Gandhiji refuses to be tricked by the rosy socialistic picture of plenty of material goods equally divided. Such plenty would not compensate for the moral loss involved in the loss of individuality. Gandhiji is too practical to deny absolutely the need of some centralised industry for the requirement of modern civilisation. Yet he is too moral and humanitarian to allow the machine to swallow up the free individual. Whenever it is necessary to have centralised production it must be in the hands and under the control of the community.

Political life, internal and international, must be guided by truth and non-violence. There must be no secret diplomacy and armaments. Holders of political power must be the servants of their people. Their economic life must be in keeping with the average standards of comfort prevalent in the nation. No work

or profession must be considered high or low, provided it serves the social end for which it is intended. Every worker, however humble, is not only worthy of his wage but also of honour.

Thus it is, in brief, that Gandhiji proposes to spiritualise politics and economics and appropriate for humanity the great moral principles of justice and equality underlying political democracy and economic socialism. All his practical programmes are directed towards the concrete aim of providing the moral man with a moral society. His philosophy of life for the individual and for society gathers up in one sweeping whole the moral, material and organisational gains of political democracy and economic socialism. It thus sums up the different trends of modern human history. It works for a new non-violent revolution and ushers in a fresh epoch in history.

It is to educate the individual and society in the light of the principles of this new revolution that he has suggested his new scheme of education. He has given us both a natural and scientific method in education and provided it with worthy and noble aims for the individual and for society. It is in this light that his scheme of education must be judged.

THE POETRY OF BHARATI ŚARABHAI

E. E. Speight

*O cloud, beloved,
 So proud,
 So far removed,
Do you dare deny
 the envy
 of unbounded curiosity ?*

*

*

*

*'Come nearer, let me look into your eyes.'
So I come,
Your big, sad eyes, your dark, blue-veined eyes,
Your eyes, wizard-isleted in an ivory sea,
Come to rest upon me
In silence : silence loud, unnatural,
Leaping tongued by
Formless agonies
Primeval and unsatisfied.*

LOVER of poetry, can you place these lines ? Can you assign them any curve in the orbit of Hardy or Tennyson or Shelley,—Crashaw, Marvell or Herrick ? Can you see any affinity with Meredith, or Browning or Hopkins ? Have you seen those fatuous last dozen pages in the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* ? Surely there is a new voice here, a new vision, something is being said to which it is not easy to apply the canons of a more leisurely, more eloquent day. Of the poetry of that day we were told that it was an heroic story that hath not been heard ; the creation by man of what was more than human ; a temple worship vast and vague ; the breath and finer spirit of knowledge ; the highest eloquence of passion ;

the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth ; the honey of all flowers, the quintessence of all sciences, the marrow of wit, and the very phrase of angels. It is not recoverable thought, but a haze caught from a vaster receding thought. It makes a high music of all observation, thought and feeling, and its source is in the infinite tenderness of the human heart.

Life was enshrined in poetry when it was felt to be a lovely thing to be known, for poetry was a glorious rebirth of prose, the real absolute, making our minds become moments of imaginative splendour, lifting the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, a mystical collaboration of a subtle element of form in the travail of the spirit, endeavouring to condense out of the flying vapours of the world an image of human perfection,—the flame of life made visible.

We were told that poetry is not only a criticism of life, but an interpretation of life, an illumination of life,—because poetry consists in saying the thing itself. Also, that it is essential to poetry that it be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature ; that it be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash ; that it be impassioned, and so able to move our feelings and wake our affections. It was taken for granted that metre and rhyme, constituting the sensuous aroma, were even more necessary than store of imagery. And only the other day we were told the portentous fact that the essential charm of poetry lies in its power of inducing that mode of transcendental feeling which is experienced as solemn sense of the overshadowing presence of *That which was, and is, and ever shall be*.

At times these sayings of poets and their followers pointed beyond their time, indicating the horizons, and beyond, of the great realm of poetry. Truth, it was recognized, has infinitely varied accents, and the poetry which is not original is worthless. Poetry is the strongest link between the ages, the true lingua franca of the world, and it is always beginning again.

One who was steeped in the lore of ancient India told us that

all true poetry was written on the Mount of Transfiguration. And one who has in his veins the very throb of that ancient glory avers that the bright function of poetry comes when the poet becomes the seer and revealer to man of his eternal self.

But this poetry of our enlightened age, how does it answer to these resonant assertions ? With all our increasing command of the forces of nature, do we come any nearer to the ultimate beauty, the ultimate secrets, the ultimate meaning ? By our very advances in league with the lightning, the ether, the cosmic radiance, are we not coming to look for ways of escape from that ceaseless compulsion to restlessness ? Are we not tempted to long with an English poet : "To see the great souls of men and women, steadfast in existence as stars in a windless pool"—and to say with the same poet :

*When I lived I sought no wings,
Schemed no heaven, planned no hell,
But content with little things,
Made an earth and it was well.*

The world was never so full of poets as today. The influence of Whitman, and still more widely of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who have both revealed the possibilities of freer patterns in lyrical expression, has set moving a myriad tongues in every great speech we know. The result is chaos, and a rushing to extremes in literary composition corresponding to the effect of the Great War upon the lives of individuals. There are, of course, many poets who are keeping their heads, some of them faithful to the old traditions and the old technique. But there are many who move in a circle of machines rather than of books, which, of course, may make for good as well as for bad, just because it calls for character in the increasingly arduous circumstances accompanying rapid advance in technical skill.

It is not many years ago that critics were demanding some recognition by the poets of the new horizon of human intellect, especially in the field of science, and today one of our younger

poets can assure us that modern poets are making strenuous attempts to tap the power of science by absorbing scientific data into their work. The poets are answering the challenge, and are in revolt. One of them assures us that poetry is on its way toward as great variety as modern music enjoys. And another, in a retort to the late poet laureate, that there is as much room for invention and successful progress in the technique of free verse as in metrical prosody.

There was a fascinatingly cryptic utterance some twenty five years ago by one of our leading critics, Prof. W. P. Ker.

There are some very strange occurrences in the tradition of modern verse, where the regular succession of modes is interrupted as by electrical or ethereal messages from outside.

This has been abundantly recognized since the death of Prof. Ker, and is being illustrated in strange and often disconcerting ways which may at times be safely attributed to inner complex rather than to external influence. But one of our living poets, Mr. C. Day Lewis, has carried our interest a little further :

Whence these visitors come the poet cannot say ; whether out of the upper air, influences from the source of all light : or are daimons, the lords of energy, alive in all matter : or from the dark continent in his own mind where mankind's past is stored, an Atlantis lost beneath the waves of consciousness.

Dynamos have already become daimons. There are already able apologists for the new methods of poetry. At the very beginning of the movement Gerald Hopkins wittily expressed the desire for change. "The effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise." And a generalization by Prof. Fenollosa about the same time also points to a main feature of the verse we find such arduous reading as that of Mr. T. S. Eliot : "All real poetry is just this underground perception of organic relation between what custom classifies as different."

The poets who are actually carrying out these hazardous experiments are among the first to recognize their tentative nature. Some attribute the revolution to a need of revitalization ; some write believing that real art comes from the brain, reversing the old dictum that great thoughts come from the heart. Some go cautiously, allowing free verse only when the resulting rhythm proves more satisfactory than traditional ones.

But there are those who accept the situation at its starkest, as he who affirms the joy of poetry in ruin, the scattering hand, the bursting pod,

God's laughter at the shattering of the world.

There seems to be a consensus of recognition that we are definitely in a new era. We have such statements as the following, which may give some clue to the apparitions of today in poetry :

The day of sacred books is over ! It is the aim of poetry now, and of the arts generally, not to write the Upanishads or to build the Parthenons of the future, but to awaken in man new faculties of thought and vision. It is for our poets to restore those private interests without which life is scarcely decent ; and only when they have taken over the whole region hitherto abandoned to clergymen will our poetry begin to speak with the Oriental largeness and authority.

John Eglington.

The complexity of modern existence and the growth of particular observation have killed simple faiths and ambitious optimisms . . . the individual mind no more now surrenders to them than to the cosmos. It cultivates self-discipline, self-expression, and above all, self-responsibility. Its beliefs and passions must be tested on the anvil of actuality. It will only approach the absolute through the relative, the universal through the particular ; the human soul in all honesty stakes out claims against the universal.

Hugh Fausset.

There are two things to distinguish, first the particular faculty of mind to see things as they really are, and apart from the conventional ways in which you have been trained to see them. This is itself rare enough in

all consciousness. Sec^ond, the concentrated state of mind, the grip over oneself which is necessary in the actual expression of what one sees. To prevent one falling into the conventional curves of ingrained technique, to hold on through infinite detail and trouble to the exact curve you want.

T. E. Hulme.

It is difficult for us who were born to the great tradition of *Tintern*, *Adonais*, and the *Grecian Urn* to give any place in our affections to the attempts of many of the younger writers to create poetry without tradition, to make oddity prevail over reason, and purely individual emotion over the larger ways of self-expression. We still prefer humour, sympathy and reverence. But when we find a poet really earnest in the endeavour, by the help of untried collocation of words, to give utterance to an unwillingness to follow the beaten track, we are the better for encouraging him by at least our interest. In this case it is a that rare phenomenon,—a poetess.

The author of the lines quoted at the head of this article is a young Indian lady little older than Chatterton ever was. She has enjoyed the advantage of a wisely and generously directed education, has graduated with honours at Oxford, and made the acquaintance of living poets whose work her own most nearly resembles. But what she writes is a reaction rather than an approximation to her experience abroad.

She is partaking in the impulse to new values, realising as well as our western writers what Verhaeren calls a vast hope, born of the unknown, and displacing the old poise of life, of which our souls are weary. And with our western poets she is finding a new expression which demands some effort on the part of the reader. Meaning and satisfaction are not there at first sight. As with Mr. T. S. Eliot's experience on beginning to read Dante, uncomprehended it is lovely, but, in the same way, her obscurity is of a suggestive kind, and her natural utterance but reveals her sincerity. She countenances no resort to false simplicity.

Here is work refreshing in its independence of English

tradition in phrasing and rhythm, and tradition which has laid so much of English verse by Indian poets open to the charge of mere imitation. It comes out well in comparison with a good deal of that found worthy of inclusion in our recent anthologies. And as such it is worth study, as technique, as psychology, and as instinctive reaction to circumstance.

It is particularly fitting that this experiment should be made by one who is not English herself. Conscious that her personal rhythms of thought are not to be wedded to English metres, save in an imitative way, she is free to express herself without rhyme or regular stanza. We should naturally expect that the fusion of Indian thought and English phrasing in a clear mind would have a notable result,—in modern parlance an emergence of value.

"It is largely by turning phrases," says Mr. C. E. Montague, "that things are grasped, as portrait painters tell you that, in no figurative sense, they discover character through brush work." One meaning of which is that they discover, or reveal, their own character,—a common-place of Far Eastern theory, as, of course, the poets do by their verse.

The free verse written by the more recent English acolytes has by its extreme dissociation and paranoiac feeling elicited the epithet "gorilla Esperanto". But there is much that neither ribaldry nor parody can rule out, much that is elusive, but not in any nonsensical or Sitwellian way. Out of it there comes something different from meaning,—aroma, suggestiveness, challenge to both the alert mind and the clairvoyant or spell-bound states. As we should expect, the most sincere work is an endeavour to express the new and multifarious content of which our poets are becoming increasingly aware. The characteristic English obsession to avoid repetition, to find new ways of expression, is replaced by a consciousness that new forms are necessitated by the speeding up of life, and the surging in of new knowledge demands new rhythms, even if these be nearer to those of what we call prose.

Modern poets' have seized upon a conclusion which is being elaborated by scientists but which goes far back in English philosophy. It is the theory of newness and beauty resulting from the association of familiar elements, the sudden apparition of

Strange combinations out of common things.

Some of these statements have a direct bearing upon the most earnest of our modern poetry. Thus Keyserling says :

When a group of spiritual values which harmonise properly in rhythm and quality is apprehended as a unit, we experience something which is qualitatively new and individual.

Prof. Julian Huxley :

With the power of organizing mental architecture in relation not only to past individual experience, not only to past racial experience, but also to general concepts such as purpose, duty, piety, truth, efficiency, holiness, beauty, self-sacrifice, honesty and the like, all sorts of new and often unexpected consequences follow.

Prof. C. Lloyd Morgan :

My notion of philosophy is that, while it involves the contribution of science in all departments, it should seek to express a constructive scheme of the world—a consistent scheme which is conceived at a level of reflective thought that supplements, though it does not supersede, science. There must be nothing in this scheme which is discrepant with science, but, on this understanding, there may be constitutive features which complete the otherwise incomplete testimony of strictly scientific thought.

Lascelles Abercrombie :

The really characteristic thing about the art of poetry is its power to present the whole conceivable world—the world not merely of sense and fantasy, but of severest intellectual effort, of subtlest psychological understanding, of the highest ardours of mutinous or consenting passion—to present anything which any faculty of ours can achieve or accept, as a moment of mere delighted living, of self-sufficient experience.

These weighty canons of the theory of emergent evolution

stand, consciously or not, behind the theory and practice of the more advanced modern poetry. Indeed, not a little of this poetry is obviously science not yet fused into a spiritual glow. Our English Yogi, Mr. Yeats-Brown, speaks of such blendings, in the form of western impulse and eastern tradition, as an adventure that might lead mankind to new Eldorados. But it is obvious that these blendings occur not only in the field of things observed or experienced, but between external things and the mind itself, and consequently the quality of the emergent novelty will depend on that of the ideas contributed. This adds piquancy to any study of emergent values in poetry. Prof. Julian Huxley's nine points of view given above are also points of view of possible progress. In poetry, as in philosophic writing, they have been followed up in varying ways.

There are many of the yet unpublished poems of this young Indian writer which reflect these foreign intellectual movements, and with them are inseparately blended her own instinctive sympathies and resolution.

It is consonant with the subtle braininess of so many sections of the Indian intelligentsia that this new poetry should find able exponents in India, for it gives greater scope to individuality without demanding any approach to traditional English technique. "Poetic melody," it has been said, "is not the same thing as music ; it is much more deeply idiomatic and national." And so the compensation for an Indian poet's inability to attain to genuine poetic melody in a foreign medium is this freedom which allows the individual rhythm, controlling the foreign words, to interpret experience.

Philosophy attempts the survey ; poetry seizes the moment, and by transforming it gives it permanence. We should not expect a Dante, a Milton or a Browning to make a harmonious composition of the confusion that is life today.

Reading these poems of so young a spirit, and realising that the writer is so little bound to traditions of association in technique and imagination in the medium she employs, it becomes

a real interest to watch her progress in poetic reaction to her time and surroundings.

It is clear that she is working towards a permanence of form which is artistic in the main, suffused by the ethical import of her sympathies. The contributing elements in this advance will show development. She may discard rhyme and assonance, or make less obvious use of them. The rise and fall of her rhythms may change with a growing sense of order and clarity, and her reserve tighten in conformity with a general return to restraint. But let us hope that time with its revenges will not reduce the vividness of her experience or the earnestness of her convictions.

She is alive because she is pondering riddles, divining momentous certainties.

*O the power and the mute questionnaire
begotten of all unremembered lives :
Golden bees flown from honeyed hives,
Wistfulness slow dawning of a long awaiting.*

Such is her poet's way of suggesting the wonder behind all that baffles, and the resolution in symbolic beauty.

Her fortunate circumstances and their possibilities of resplendent revelation, mean nothing to her in comparison with her sense of precious selfhood, the soul behind the glorious raiment, her desire to be known beyond her outward seeming. She is conscious of an impelling significance in the downcast and the poorest just beyond the northern guardsmen and the severing speed of luxury. One who has no home is building a palace for her and hers : a coolie woman is shaping the fountain symbol in a cool courtyard for the coming year, and the contrast moves her to the protest of words, if not to the ultimate surrender to service which has given one of her kinsfolk her look of sweet nobility.

Speaking of the dreaming head of Buddha :

*Marble-black against the sky,
Like a storied thunder-cloud, shining moist,
In secret hidden with potency,—*

she celebrates another loftiness, the cell of her own soul, above the dense multitude, beyond the endless positive words of man.

Very beautiful her reaching out tendril-wise to the infinite loveliness :

*Give me your hand,
Run, run with me to the end,
Two shadows leaping in front,
Down to the sand and on to the sea,
The feet-caressing, the sweet lapping sea,
Where no end is.
And at the coming of dawn
When all the windows fly open,
And the sun's hollow eyes,
Riding high
Will come the great seventh wave
to take us away.*

*Where no windows are,
no light,
No moon, no night,
Just the infinite,
The endless bareness,
The sand.*

Here is a what we must ask of every one aspiring to be a poet— a new transformation of the salt, the honey and the wormwood of life. And this transformation is heightened by a poignant humanity made vivid by play of intellect and imagery which subtly enriches her thought.

Her writing shows a wisdom that is more than the harvest of her reading, and she is assuredly making literature out of life, not out of literature.

INDIA IN A FEDERAL UNION OF THE NATIONS

Jawaharlal Nehru

(*We are grateful to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for allowing us to publish the following extract from his letter to an American Federal Unionist.*—Ed.)

I AM glad you have written to me at some length about Clarence Streit's book, *Union Now*, and cleared up some of the misunderstandings that have arisen. The whole basis of the Indian national movement has been a democratic one. We have claimed independence for India but we have laid emphasis on the fact that there can be and should be no absolute independence of any nation in the future as this independence leads to conflicts and a cutting up of the world. More and more we have stood for some kind of world union. Nationalism in the West, specially as exemplified in Italy and Germany, has become a terribly reactionary force. But nationalism in a country which is under foreign domination is a progressive force leading to wider perspectives. It is perfectly true that there is a danger that even this nationalism may lead to something that is undesirable in the end, if it is not checked. In any event there is a strong desire among the politically conscious people in India for a world union of which India should be an equal member.

The ideal therefore of Streit's book is attractive, but the manner of approach towards that ideal has given rise to a great deal of suspicion in India. That suspicion is not due to any feeling as to the *bona fides* of the author, but rather to the fear that the imperialist powers will inevitably take advantage of any such development to consolidate their position. You will remember the fate of the League of Nations. We all know why it failed, although there can be no doubt that the spirit behind it was admirable. But ultimately it became an instrument in the hands

of England and France chiefly for the advancement of their own policies, which had little to do with the spirit that gave it birth. So also a federal union which is demanded by a few great powers with colonial domains attached to them, might well be converted into an instrument of their policy. It is certainly likely that in the process of forming such a union certain new forces will be released. These might tone down the present forms of exploitation and gradually lead to better results. Still there is that great danger.

There is also the danger that any European Union (including the United States and the British Self-Governing Dominions) may become a solid racial and imperialist block attempting to exploit and control Asia and Africa. This would result in big conflicting blocks of nations and wars on a world scale.

It seems to me that the whole conception of a Federal Union must be based on a preliminary liquidation of the idea and practice of imperialism. That involves a change in the social and economic structure to a large extent, at any rate in so far as international activities are concerned. If internationally we proceed in a different way than heretofore, it becomes necessary for the national economic structures to conform to this international structure, or else there will be no co-ordination and conflicts will arise. Our present-day conflicts and wars are after all fundamentally due to a breakdown of the structure of capitalist imperialism. If that is not recognized, we shall never deal properly with the causes and all our attempts may fail to yield fruit.

Ignoring for the present other countries and areas in the world, it seems to me that no federal union can possibly ignore the Soviet Union, China, and India. These are not only enormous areas in themselves with half the world's population between them, but also economically and politically they have a great importance. Both India and China may have their difficulties to face today, but potentially they have enormous resources. No world economy can possibly succeed unless they

are included in it. This inclusion might be through compulsion. If so there is bound to be continuous conflict. The only other way is their consent. To leave them out means to leave out certain vital factors which will later on upset the apple cart.

It may be said that all this can follow later. But the time for steps towards a certain ideal is almost past. We have to jump over a chasm and one cannot take this in several steps. Even to attempt at this is to invite disaster.

The idea that the British Commonwealth will gradually expand into a larger federal union seems to me fundamentally wrong. First of all because the very basis of the Commonwealth is opposed to this idea. It is essentially a combination of a few self-governing countries with a large colonial Empire which is exploited to the advantage of the former. It is much more likely that the disintegrating influences in the Empire itself will prove stronger than the integrating influence and that the British Commonwealth as such will cease to be. In the colonial Empire of Britain, including India, it is not possible to expect any such imaginary fulfilment of its wishes. There are of course psychological reasons and these as you know are sometimes very strong. But the political and economic reasons are obvious enough. What is likely to happen is that under a facade of political self-government, we shall have continuance of economic control and exploitation by the City of London. That is to say, we shall continue with the Imperial fabric, though our bonds might be loosened. In foreign policy we shall be tied to British policy and the growth of India will be impeded in a hundred ways. The real Indian problems, the problem of poverty, the land problem, the growth of social services and the like will all remain tied up, because there is no ultimate solution of them in this fabric of Empire. Then there is the important question of the treatment of Indians in the British Dominions. You cannot expect us to combine with people who treat us in a disgraceful way.

For these reasons as well as many others, the whole conception of India reaching a federal union through the British

Commonwealth is alien to us, though we are perfectly agreeable to joining such a union of which England and the British Dominions are members. India is at the present moment powerfully attracted by China and our contacts are growing. We have much in common with each other and thousands of years of cultural contacts. We should like to be associated with China in any large world organisation. Why should we be cut off from her and be associated in a narrower group ?

Our position today is one which is perfectly compatible with that of a federal union. But it is not compatible with our reaching that union through the British Empire. At the beginning of the war we had asked for a declaration of war aims from the British Government as well as an application of the principle of democracy to India and to British Colonies. That declaration of war aims never came and instead British policy has been progressively becoming more and more imperialistic. In India itself we have reverted to complete autocratic British rule and our Provincial parliaments in most of the provinces have ceased to function. Even so the British Parliament has gone out of its way to limit still further the powers of the provincial Assemblies in India. Everything which has happened in India during these five months has demonstrated that British Imperialism is functioning as of old and that there has been no change of vision.

Internally we asked for a Constituent Assembly elected on adult franchise to frame India's Constitution without any external interference. This Constitution would have inevitably been on a democratic basis. In order to get over the difficulty of large masses voting directly under adult franchise, we have suggested that there might be an intermediate stage involving indirect election. Further to meet all the possible apprehensions of minority groups, we have stated that minority problems should be settled not merely by a majority of the votes in a Constituent Assembly but by agreement with the minority in question. In case there is no agreement the matter to be referred to an

impartial international tribunal whose decision we shall accept. This is a perfectly democratic method of procedure, it is absolutely fair to the minorities, and it is easily feasible, that is to say if the British Government does not come in the way. When this Constituent Assembly meets and draws up India's Constitution, it can elect representatives to meet the representatives of the British Government in order to discuss and determine our common interests. These representatives can be authorised to consider proposals for a federal world union. I have no doubt that Indian Nation will gladly enter such a union as a free unit, provided that Union itself does not consist of a narrower group which is opposing other big groups.

The British Government has opposed our demands and has tried to encourage every minority and disruptive element in India to come in the way. They are now encouraging Pan-Islamism in India and abroad as well as such reactionary and feudal elements in India which are opposed to the democratic ideal. It is obviously impossible under these circumstances for us to offer any present or future co-operation to the British Government. We have avoided active conflict but the conditions are such that the present deadlock cannot continue indefinitely.

I have written to you at some length to explain our position. I hope I have made it clear that we are all in favour of the idea of the Federal Union. But past experience has shown us that no amount of idealistic language can restrain the evil motives and practices of politicians. These motives spring largely from economic profit under the present system. If that system continues the best laid scheme will go wrong. Therefore the federal union must be based on a different system and on an elimination of that evil motive.

PLANTS FROM CHINA*

F. W. Sch.

At the seat of the Association of Berlin Artists (Tiergartenstrasse 2a)¹ one can now spend a charming hour in the midst of the works by the Chinese painter, M. Ju Péon, Professor at Nanking Academy. Why, then, China of all places, many will perhaps wonder. To begin with, Prof. Ju Péon who has studied both in Berlin and Paris, is by no means unknown here. Besides, he can undoubtedly be regarded—and this is evident also from the exhibition—as one of the outstanding representatives of painting in modern China, which up till now was little known in Germany. In the Guide to the exhibition Prof. Ju Péon, in picturesque words characteristic of China, thanks the Association of Berlin Artists for introducing him to the German public. “To my great pleasure,” says this artist from the Far East, “the Association will for some time show in its wonderful garden a few plants from a different climate.”

A study of these “plants” appears to us both instructive and inspiring. The Chinese painting with its vivid, suggestive, often quite naturalistic mode of expression stands in any case nearer to the German mind than, for example, that of Japan, which is primarily concerned with the decorative, the “beauty” aspect. Prof. Ju Péon’s works have a still greater appeal to our mind, because inspired by certain features of European art, he has sought to loosen the grip of conventions on Chinese painting, which have prevailed for thousands of years and have effectively hemmed in its growth, but in doing so, he has neither impaired the originality of the Chinese school nor compromised those

* As an introduction to the paintings of Prof. Ju Péon, which were exhibited at Santiniketan in December last and more recently in Calcutta, and of which a few are reproduced in this Journal, we are glad to publish the above appreciation by a well-known German critic, which has been translated by Dr. Sudhir Sen of Sriniketan from the original German as published in *Der Westen*, Berlin, November 1933.—*Ed.*

1. The Association is situated in the midst of a big garden which is the pride of Berlin.

basic principles which have guided its creative activities. There can, in other words, be no question of a Europeanisation of the art of the Far East, which was noticeable in a number of works during the exhibition of Japanese art recently held at the Pariser Platz, Berlin. Here we have, on the contrary, a classic example of a most fruitful marriage between two cultures. Such blending can, in fact, never be harmful and in our age when distance is being constantly annihilated, it is bound to occur more frequently than, for example, at a time when a Dürer went to Italy or, later still, when a Leibl and a Menzel further refined their artistic skill in Paris. What might be called "Frankification", that is to say, a blind imitation of France, which a few artists used to parade with much gusto and which has since been overcome by the Reich Chamber of Culture, ran counter to what has just been said.

It is in keeping with the proverbial filial love and ancestor worship of the Chinese that, at a prominent place of the exhibition, there hangs a picture of the whole family, painted by the father of the artist. A comparison of this picture, which rigidly follows the conventional line of Chinese art, with those of the son clearly indicates the progress that has been achieved. The son shows greater freedom, both in conception and execution, his colouring is more copious, his strokes are bolder and more full of temperament. We in this country often went to extremes in our experimentation with different styles and are at present groping for a new and comprehensive mode of expression which, while preventing a reversion to Classicism or Realism and preserving every refinement empirically introduced in the course of development, must at the same time be natural and throb with life. No wonder that for us the charming synthesis effected between abstract and naturalistic factors which is evident, for example, in a good many pictures of animals, should be particularly impressive. There is not the slightest trace of the distortions of a hyper-individualistic expressionism or of the empty thrill of an effect-mongering impressionism. Ducks on water are

actually ducks, floating, downy, white, velvety figures, "subjectivised" as it were. And the water too is really water, though not that imitated, more or less good, liquid, transparent stuff, but water etherealised.

A synthesis of this nature is perhaps never possible for us, if only because of the pronounced analytical bent of the European mind. Nor is there any reason why a study of these works should impel us to imitation. They show us, above all, that the so-called problems in the sphere of painting are not insoluble, that they can, on the other hand, never be solved theoretically, but call for the creative genius of master minds.

There is one more point which deserves emphasis on the occasion of this exhibition, for it is almost a condition of all creative work and applies to all times and all peoples, namely, education. The education which, especially, a Chinese painter receives, is even to-day supposed to be as comprehensive as possible. He learns, through unstinted labour, not only to handle the small light brush in such a way that he can draw all naturalistic forms almost with a mechanical accuracy and place them flawlessly in the proper perspective. In addition, he has to be sufficiently acquainted with poetry and music so that he could let a little of both flow into his works ; not to mention that, like Prof. Ju Péon, he has to master every branch of painting : figure, composition and graphically narrative aspect (as we find them here on the broad screens which represent scenes from Chinese legends) and the purely decorative and picturesque aspect (which is so remarkable in the scrolls and the kakemoni). In other words, not exaggerated specialisation, but painting as a comprehensive whole, should be the motto for those who would espouse it as a profession.

Yes, they have a good deal to tell us, "these plants from a different climate", these works which have been fed by a hoary culture, but have been executed by an eminent artist of modern China, who is at the same an ardent admirer of Dürer.



By Ju P'én





An Oil Painting of three Chinese Generals.

By Ju P'ao



Maharishi's seat
at Santiniketan



By Ju Pius



A Pencil sketch of Maharishi's seat at Santiniketan.

DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

K. R. Kripalani

THERE is an aspect of Non-violence which does not seem to have received the attention it merits. The immediate political objective of our people being the achievement of self-government, we have hitherto thought of Non-violence only as a possible means to that end. Those who believe it capable of achieving that end do so partly because they have been witness to its actual success in the field during the last two decades, partly because the alternative seems too hazardous to risk, and partly because of their faith in the political genius of its author, Mahatma Gandhi. Perhaps to some extent the moral and religious quality of the means has influenced people in their judgment, but in the main they have taken to it in the hope that it will achieve the end, or, at any rate, take them a long way towards it. Those, on the other hand, who are sceptic or definitely hostile, argue that historical evidence does not warrant such extravagant faith, there being no precedent of a people winning political independence by these means. Even the traditionally pacifist Chinese had to resort to violence to overthrow the Manchu usurpers. But since history not only repeats itself but also creates fresh precedents, there seems to be no scientific basis on which to decide the issue between these two assumptions, save by allowing the experiment to work and prove or disprove its hypothesis.

But though there may be no historical proof of the success of Non-violence as a political weapon for overthrowing a rule itself guarded by violence, there is plenty of evidence in favour of this method, not merely as a possible means but as the only effective means of preserving democratic institutions once they have been set up. If we study the political habits of those peoples who have succeeded in preserving such institutions, we shall find that they have been enabled to do so only when, and to the

extent that, they have abjured the use of violence as a way of converting one another to their respective points of view. England, where such institutions have taken so deep a root that even contrary institutions like Monarchy and the Peerage have been made to subserve a democratic end, is in this respect a good field for the study of the political habits of its people. If it be true that people deserve the institutions they have, then it should be worth our while to observe the political habits of a people who seem to have succeeded in adapting even anti-democratic institutions to popular control. Of these habits the most remarkable seems to be the tacit understanding between the various political parties, and indeed between each citizen and all, that their political differences shall not be settled by resort to arms. They will use every possible means of harassing and defeating their opponents save violence. Thus the Conservatives to whom nothing could be more odious than the possibility of the representatives of Labour coming into power as the Government of Great Britain, have nevertheless allowed that spectre to haunt them and have even twice seen it assume flesh, rather than risk the use of violence in their political life by using their power, while in government, to suppress all opposition.

It is not that the Britisher abhors the use of violence on all occasions : if he did, he may indeed make the whole world safe for democracy, but he would have to renounce the ill-gotten gains of his Empire. Both in the rule of India and of his other colonial possessions, as in his international relations, he has freely trusted to the power of violence ; which is why there is no democracy in India and nothing but anarchism in the international world. But in his own land and with his own people he has evolved a different technique of political behaviour. He trusts to the power of persuasion to convert his fellow-citizens and would rather submit to a verdict he knows to be wrong than challenge it by violence.

One may, indeed, question how far the British are truly democratic even in their own country ; how far the social, politi-

cal and economic privileges are equally shared by all the people. One can even demonstrate that in actual practice these privileges are, more or less, the monopoly of a certain hereditary and moneyed class. Nevertheless the fact remains that the essential condition of political democracy, namely, freedom in the choice of one's rulers, is actively enjoyed by Englishmen, however badly that choice might be exercised. A hundred subtle and sinister influences, controlled and manipulated by the class that owns the tools of propaganda, may seduce or scare the common man's judgment and make him exercise his choice against his best interests, but so long as no violence is used to terrorise him and render the exercise of this political right impossible, he must be regarded, in the last analysis, as free, and the society to which he belongs democratic.

What would happen if this habit of non-violence were missing in English political life? Obviously the group best organised and most eager to seize the power of the state would either terrorise the government in power by a series of well-planned assassinations, as the Japanese militarists periodically practise, or declare open defiance and march on the capital as Mussolini did, in which case if it succeeded it would see that no other political opposition remains to take advantage of the precedent, or if it failed it would most probably be exterminated, as were Captain Röhm and other "friends" of Hitler in 1934. For the government in power, in order to protect itself at any cost, will meet violence with greater violence, in which process no vestige of democracy will be allowed to survive. That is why Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, not to mention the numerous other dictators that strut on the European stage, do not allow any opposition in their States to organise itself, for they are afraid that that organisation will be for violence, they having set the example.

It may be that democracy is not the ideal or the most desired form of government and that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be more welcomed by the workers, even as some

sort of Fascism may answer the needs of the possessing classes better. My object in this paper is not to enquire into the merits of different forms of government, but to suggest that if democracy is to function (assuming that it is a desirable form of government or at any rate a form actually desired by some peoples), it can only do so successfully when the citizens get used to the habit of settling their issues by recourse to argument and persuasion and completely forswear the use of violence for that purpose. Only to the extent that this habit is effective in the ordering of their political activities, has democracy a chance to bear its fruits of freedom for the citizen.

To an Indian used to a century and a half of British violence, indeed to all students of the history of British foreign policy, it may sound paradoxical to quote the British as a model of non-violence, even though that non-violence be restricted to their domestic practice. Yet the paradox is only part of the much bigger paradox of life which presents us daily with innumerable instances of human beings virtuous in one respect, vicious in another, loving and unselfish to some of their fellowmen, brutal and selfish to the rest. We are never virtuous logically. Do we not meet with instances in our own country of men who would not wittingly cause an injury even to an ant, who yet allow in their midst—indeed vehemently resist the abolition of—such awful survivals of social callousness, as a Hindu child-widow? In our jails will be found many a vegetarian who did not scruple to murder a human being. It should not therefore seem too fantastic to regard John Bull as a very non-violent citizen in his own society, even though he himself would be shy of claiming for himself so gandhian an adjective.

In India, on the other hand, despite our so-called traditional mildness and two decades of Gandhiji's leadership, we are far from non-violence in our mutual dealings. We are more non-violent when we face the British than we are when we have to deal with each other,—by each other I mean, one community against another, one party against its rival. No wonder Gandhiji

suspects our non-violence to be rooted in weakness and fear. Such non-violence, that is, in so far as it is derived from cowardice, instead of making freedom of the people possible, will make the perpetuation of their slavery inevitable. We cannot decide a simple historical matter, whether a particular building in Sukkur was originally a mosque or not, without repeating the history of Chengiz Khan's mass massacres. It is impossible to conceive of democracy functioning as a reality in India, so long as our political and communal parties keep up the practice of encouraging their followers to terrorise their opponents. Despite our protestations of a conscious creed of non-violence and our intellectual worship of democracy, we have not yet developed the habits necessary to make actual the former and real the latter. Communal outrages disfigure our political existence as persistently as does small-pox the faces of our men and women, and there is no reason to suppose that these social diseases will automatically disappear with the achievement of our independence any more than that the plague and cholera will dissolve themselves in the wake of the British domination. Whether we win our national independence by violent or non-violent means, certain it is that we shall have to master the technique of the latter to be able to live at peace with one another and to maintain for the ordinary citizen those elementary but essential liberties which alone can make *swaraj* real to him. If the citizen goes in constant dread of his political or religious opponent's violence, he would prefer any dictator who safeguards his physical security and the security of his family and his means of livelihood to the sham of gilded democracy ; even as the Hindus in Sind would be glad if the provincial autonomy in their province were suspended and the responsibility for law and order assumed directly by the Governor. In the meanwhile it is a strange sight to see the Sindhi bania at target practice, for even he must learn to kill to protect his women and children. It is perhaps much better that men should exterminate one another than that only some should have the monopoly of killing and the rest of hiding under the cots. But

no society can stand the strain of such universal heroism for long, and sooner or later men in despair turn to a tyrant for peace and would willingly "contract away" their liberty in return for security. Hobbes was not so unhistorical after all.

It is in a sense unfortunate that non-violence is being held in the light of a religious creed in our country, with the result that many persons look upon it as a characteristically Hindu discovery and therefore very good for the soul but hardly necessary to the material welfare of a society. Clever people who have taken great pains to fix their vision in proper historical perspective, even enquire, "Why drag religion into politics?"—as though men, save when they are religious, are always violent. (As a matter of history, religious people, e.g. the early Muslims or the Christian Crusaders, have been more violent than people who were not inspired by religious passion in their conduct, e.g. the Chinese.) It is desirable therefore that the practice of non-violence should be studied in its mundane and practical aspects, as a way of democratic and wise behaviour, and not as an extension into politics of Jaina vegetarianism or of the Christian idealism of turning the other cheek. For we find that wherever it has been accepted, however unconsciously, as the way of social and political life, it has brought to the people peace and liberty. There is an interesting story related of Kao Tsung, a Chinese Emperor of the T'ang dynasty. "This is to the effect that in 666 he paid a visit to a clan famous for many generations on account of its harmony. The Emperor inquired of the chief the secret of this age-long concord. The patriarch took a sheet of paper and wrote thereon a hundred characters. Kao Tsung eagerly received the document, but found to his amazement but one ideograph, a hundred times repeated, namely, that for 'forbearance'. So the Emperor learned :

That State shall need no other word, I swear,
Whose statesmen get by heart 'Forbear, forbear !' ”*

* *An Outline History of China* : Gowen and Hall.

A COMMON PEACE MOVEMENT FOR INDIA

Marjorie Sykes

It is not many months since the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* published a fervent and moving appeal for peace written by George Lansbury, the veteran English peace worker, in April 1939. A major war was even then imminent, but the actual catastrophe had not occurred, and with his characteristically dogged faith, George Lansbury pleaded that the peace lovers of the world should spare no effort to avert what was not after all inevitable. Now that catastrophe is a fact ; war conditions have raised the invisible barriers of censorship, and pacifists in each country are, to some extent at least, isolated—knowing that there are many of like beliefs in allied, neutral and enemy countries, but in varying degrees denied the freedom of intercourse which even the armed watchfulness we miscalled “peace” permitted us to enjoy. Many of the most sincere lovers of peace feel that war, with all its degrading brutality, is a lesser evil than the ruthless destruction of moral values which seems to them the only alternative.

Yet in the West the work of twenty years has not been all in vain. English witnesses are unanimous that the outbreak of war with Germany has not been, this time, the signal for such degrading persecutions of the “enemy alien” as darken my own childish memories of 1914. It is replaced by a sense of being involved with the opposing peoples in a common calamity, in which we must at all costs preserve the decencies of human sympathy with individuals. This change of public feeling is in no small measure due to the work of the convinced and well-organised pacifist societies which have steadily increased in range and mutual cooperation during the intervening period. Societies confined to one sect or way of thought, while continuing the intensive education of their membership in a way that none but they could do so effectively, have combined to set up regular

consultative machinery such as the National Peace Council and the Council of Christian Pacifist Groups, or to support the inclusive Peace Pledge Union which caught the imagination of the people. The strength of the present active will to peace is reflected in the number of conscientious objectors among the young men called up under the Military Service Acts—about 2% of the total involved, a far larger proportion than in 1914-18.

During these years of thought and study of what is involved in peacemaking, the interests and hopes of European and American pacifists have often turned to India, and especially to Gandhiji's proclamation of the principle of non-violence and his fearless experiments in its application. Many saw in his non-violent campaigns a most significant practical interpretation, in actual modern conditions, of the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. As the outlook in Europe and the Far East has grown darker, they have longed to see India win, by a non-violent struggle, not only her own freedom but an even greater thing, a new way and new hope for the whole world.

Were these hopes justified? Can they even now be maintained? Voices of frank scepticism, even of cynicism, have not been lacking in India itself, and it is clear that it will not be an easy task to awaken and maintain faith in the renunciation of force as an instrument of national policy. The outbreak of war in Europe in September showed very clearly the cross-currents of thought in India. The expression of genuine sympathy with the cause of liberty, whose victory the allies proclaimed as their purpose, was much more frequent than the expression of any doubt whether that cause could in fact be served by the method of war. We agreed that a nation should keep faith with another, that Britain should keep faith with Poland; we were not slow to point the parallel and ask whether the basic morality of international relations did not also demand that she keep faith with India. But we spoke little of that most difficult question, so essential to the moral basis of a free state, the relationship between the conscience of an individual and his duty to the

community to which he belongs. Our religious organisations did not help us in this, though it is to them first that the bewildered individual looks for guidance. Such of them as published their opinions spoke of the righteousness of the allied cause, and conditionally or unconditionally identified themselves with it.

These desultory comments will serve as an introduction to a statement different in kind and purpose from those just referred to, which is printed below with an introductory paragraph from Rabindranath Tagore. It is the work of a small group of British and Indian Quakers, and was discussed and adopted by a small conference of members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) resident in India. It is therefore the work of people the inspiration of whose own pacifism is religious, and Christian; and it is issued in the hope that it will be published as widely as possible, with the following thoughts in mind, bearing on what has been said above :—

1. It should be made clear that the war method, even in a righteous cause, is not endorsed by all religious bodies or by all individuals within those bodies. This conviction is however compatible with the deepest sympathy and respect for those constrained to reach a different conclusion.

2. There exist in India types of pacifism drawing inspiration from various religious traditions and from none. With the example of Britain to show us how “union is strength”, and how a body like the Peace Pledge Union can help forward the common will to peace, it is highly desirable that those who are working in any sphere on the non-violent or pacifist principle, should be brought together to realise their common strength. The present gulf between Western and Indian followers of “ahimsa” should be bridged. This desire lies behind the request that “those in sympathy” should communicate with the secretary of the Quaker conference, in the hope that the nucleus of such a movement may be formed.

3. Thought and experiment is needed for the peaceful solution of all those political, economic and communal questions

where at present violence is frequently advocated as the only way. This raises internal no less than external issues. It also calls for effort on each plane of human life, the physical, social, and intellectual, as well as the spiritual.

Introduction to the Quaker Statement by Rabindranath Tagore.

When history suddenly goes wrong with an appalling immensity of human sacrifice, we claim from all great religions to send abroad their warning and their call. Unfortunately in such a crisis of collective moral aberration the spiritual man in us is too often persuaded to form either passively or in active agreement an unholy cooperation with the power that blindly runs amok spreading devastation. There are frenzied occasions when bombs are hurled from the air upon priceless heritages of man, shattering them into dust ; but the worst of all havoc done to humanity happens when the sacred vehicles of life's noble ideals are injured and made inactive by the virulent passion that poisons the atmosphere. And therefore it gives us an assurance of hope as we meet with an unwavering assertion of faith in humanity such as we find in this paper, the challenge of Christian ideals so bravely and beautifully uttered, urging for peace and justice and resistance to evil force. During a world-wide contamination of violence and hatred we badly need some signs of the triumph of the Divine Spirit dwelling in man, defying the congregated might of malignity.

Statement on the War, issued by the Conference of Scattered Friends, meeting at Rasulia, Hoshangabad, December, 1939.

The outbreak of war in Europe has made almost intolerable the dilemma that has of late been placed before many of the followers of Christ throughout the world : the choice between acquiescence in injustice and resistance by force. Of the possible horrors of modern war, with all man's ingenuity and scientific knowledge directed to destruction, no one can be without understanding ; and no one who has the Christian ideal of brother-

hood and love at heart can be undismayed at the forces of hate and terror that have been released. Yet all men of goodwill are agreed that the fear of aggression, under which so great a part of the world has of late been condemned to dwell, must prevent the growth of those virtues which need conditions of security and liberty.

As members of the Society of Friends in India assembled in conference, we declare our faith that the violence under which so many of our fellow-men have been living cannot be removed by further violence. The freedom destroyed by the German Government cannot be won again by a war against the German people, more especially by nations whose own selfish blindness and injustice has in past years helped to put that Government in power.

We believe that Jesus willingly let the sin of man crucify Him, because He knew that only so could the sin of man be overcome. God left men free, then as now, to choose or destroy the highest ; for unless they are free to hate and destroy they cannot learn to love and create.

We are called to follow this way of Jesus. Believing that there is something of God in every man, we do not wish to force our ideals on others, but to show to all men the spirit that alone can change hate to love.

This is to us the supreme call, and our duty of witness may involve for us even the complete rejection of the claims of our own nation to our service in war. In this hour, when the forces of hate threaten to overwhelm the world, it is a positive contribution to strive to keep alive the peaceable spirit and the rule of love in all the broad and manifold relations of life.

We will seek to cherish sympathy and understanding for those who, hating war, yet cannot think as we do, and on whom falls most heavily the burden of the conflict ; those who have responded with ready sacrifice to the call of patriotism, those left to mourn their dead. We ask all men of goodwill to remember that such burdens are borne also by the men and women of

Germany, with whom, and indeed with all humanity, we are bound together in the same tragedy.

India is as yet comparatively remote from the arena and passions of war ; may she remain so. Yet the trust in force, the bullying spirit whose final outcome is war, is all too plainly present in our midst, and shows its ugly possibilities in communal riots and the jealous suspicion of rival groups who too seldom approach each other with the desire to understand.

As Christian pacifists, we believe that there is a great and urgent need for all those in this land who believe in the way of trust and non-violence to unite in a vigorous presentation of this reconciling hope and in its application to our national needs, both in internal and external policy. We rejoice in the knowledge that our faith in the power of unarmed love is shared by men in positions of influence, including Mahatma Gandhi. We believe that such a faith shown forth in practice may be India's greatest gift to the world. We desire earnestly the fellowship of all such thinkers and workers, so that together we may all be enabled by God's grace to act and live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.*

* Those in sympathy with the position taken in the above statement are asked to communicate with Sd. Ranjit Chetsingh, Friends Settlement, Hoshangabad, C. P.

DĀRĀ SHIKUH*

Bikrama Jit Hasrat

II

NEVER perhaps, in the whole range of the history of Muslim rule in India, was there a prince, devoted with equal fervour and passion to the essential spirituality of life than Dārā Shikuh. He sought knowledge relating to the *truth and reality of Being* and postulated definite doctrines pertaining to their basic conception in Islamic mysticism. These doctrines are embodied in his works, viz., the *Risālā Hak Numa*, the *Ṭarīkat-ul-Hakikat*, the *Hasnāt-ul-‘Arifīn* and the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*. Some of these are included in the *Aphorisms of the Saints* and others are scattered in his quatrains and extant poetical compositions. Hence we find that the doctrines, which his works unfold, lack the coherence of a system. Taking them as a whole, we realise that his mysticism is experimental rather than doctrinal and is completely devoid of abstract speculations. The *Risālā* is a compendium of various works on Islamic mysticism and the *Ṭarīkat*, a treatise on the different stages of spiritual illumination, is somewhat didactic. But in all we find the echo of one dominant sentiment. They appear to have deeply influenced his religious life and are the fruit of a dearly bought experience.

Let us now turn to some of the doctrines proclaimed by Dārā Shikuh as embodied in his works.

The Doctrine of Tawhīd : The doctrine of the Unity of God, as we have already described, was his life-long study. Its perfect realisation through devotional aspects of knowledge and thought was his goal. This doctrine is foremost in all Islamic mysticism and is the creed of nearly all of the chief Sufi exponents like the

*For first part of the article see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. V, Part 8, Nov.—Jan. 1940.

pioneers of the Kādīrī and Chīṣṭī orders. To the former Dārā Shikuh owed his spiritual illumination. Without a firm belief in *Tawhīd*, the attainment of Divine Communion for a Sufi neophyte is an impossibility. The stage of *annihilation of self and union* without real separation is its basic principle :

“Everything is He, I am nothing.”²⁵

Or again :

• “There is no real existence apart from God. Man is a reflection of the Absolute Being.”²⁶

This closely follows the principle of *self-negation* and the denial of one’s own self. He must know that all his actions depend upon the Almighty. He should perceive that “all is He and all is by Him and all is His.” Dārā Shikuh writes :—

“When thou hast realised that ‘everything is He and thou art nothing’, then it would inevitably follow that thou shouldst know thyself, as thou art in reality, and will no longer remain in the bonds of consciousness of ‘I’ and ‘Thou.’ It is here that exists the truth of Unity and light of Certainty. Verily as the *Kuran* says :

‘He is within your very souls but you vision Him not’.

“It is therefore thy duty to know thy own Essence, so that thou mayst know thyself and doubts and misconceptions may not come into thy heart and thou mayst not consider this world of relativity as a veil on the face of Essence.”²⁷

He expresses the same idea in one of his quatrains :

“Here is the secret of *Tawhīd*, O friend, understand it ;
Nowhere exists anything but God.
All you see or know *other* than Him,
Verily is *separate* in name, but in essence *one* with God.”²⁸

While giving a description of *Hawwīyat* or the Truth, he does not limit his conception to the similitude from the manifestations. He sees unity in plurality. Purity and impurity are

25. *Risala Hak Numa*, Panini Office, Allahabad (1912) p. 21.

26. *Tarikat-ul-Hakikat*, included in the *Kullīyat-i- Dārā Shikuh*, Vol I, p. 8.

27. *Hak Numa*, p. 28.

28. *Ibid.* p. 24.

all aspects of His Omnipotence. All emanate from the fountain of Godhead. One who thinks even the smallest atom to be separate from Him, will miss the *Truth* and will be deprived of the blessing of union and knowledge. Dārā Shikuh remarks :

"O friend ! when the *ocean of reality* begins to move, then appear on its surface waves and forms and hundreds and thousands of bubbles and spheres come out of it and they constitute these heavens and earths. But these cannot be separate from the *ocean*, and if thou shouldst try to separate any particular wave or whirlpool from the *ocean*, thou canst not succeed. Therefore though every one of these has a separate name and form, yet in essence and reality it is one."²⁹

Such is his conception of unity in duality. The former, according to him, does not become manifold through numerosness, "as the ocean does not become split up into many parts owing to its waves." In one of his quatrains he says :

"Like an ocean is the *essence* of the Supreme Self ;
Like forms in water are all souls and objects ;
The ocean heaving and stirring within,
Transforms itself into drops, waves and bubbles."⁸⁰

At another place visualising God in the Universal Person he observes :

"Truly indeed, very truly to the eye that can see, *whole* stands clearly manifest in the *part* ; the world-illuminating sun can be recognised in every shining particle of sand. . . "⁸¹

From this stage of Divine Unity, where the consciousness between "*I*" and "*Thou*" vanishes, the Sufi proceeds gradually towards his final goal : the stage of *Fana-fil-Hak* or Submergence into the Unity. Here *self* is entirely absorbed into the Oneness of God. It is here that he exclaims :

"He whom I look is I, and I love him ;
Like two spirits, we are in one body.
Look at me and look at him,
See him and see us both."⁸²

29. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

80. *Ibid.*, 24.

81. *Ibid.*

82. Nicholson : *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*.

At this stage Dārā Shikuh asserts that partial existence becomes Universal existence and all grief, fear, fancy of duality and separation are removed from the heart. The fear of punishment and the anxiety of reward also vanishes. Man reaches the Unity with eternal salvation. He proceeds to elucidate this "state" with the following quatrain :

"So long it does not realise its separation from the ocean,
The drop remains a drop ;
So long he does not know himself to be the Creator,
The created remains a created."⁸³

And the following quatrain :

"O you, in quest of God, you seek him everywhere,
You verily are the God, not apart from him.
Already in the midst of the boundless ocean,
Your quest resembles the search of a drop for the ocean."⁸⁴

"When thou hast reached this stage", he goes on, "then arises the sun of Truth and Unity and there are removed all effects of fancies and thy lower self-consciousness. . . . When thou shalt carry this stage to perfection, there will remain no doubt that *thou art the Truth*."⁸⁵ Here, incidentally, he is swept away by a wave of emotion. He was conscious of his own shortcomings due to the material aspect of his life. "O friend," he bursts forth, "renounce worldly kingship and take up wisdom, knowledge and truth." Concluding with the following quatrain, he shows his innermost soul :—

"In thy *separation*, I have suffered pangs of anxiety,
In *union* with thee I have lost my own consciousness and
existence.
Then happiness dawned on my soul and became my lot,
Now shall I pass my days in peace both in body and mind."⁸⁶

83. *Risālā Hak Numa*. p. 26

84. *Ibid.* p. 26.

85. *Ibid.* p. 26.

86. *Ibid.* p. 27.

On Contemplation. *Mushāhida* or Contemplation means for a Sufi the spiritual vision of God in public and private without asking how or in what manner. It is two-fold. One is the result of perfect faith and the other of rapturous love. In method the former is *istdalālī* or demonstrative and the latter *iadbī* or ecstatic. Dārā Shikuh states :

"The attachment for Beatitude and Perfection concerns itself not with gain or loss. The lovers think not in terms of how or why. They are lost in the light of manifestations and submerged in the ocean of Reality. . . . They adore him in *form* and *spirit* both outwardly and inwardly. The religion and nationality do not matter. The creed and dogma have no influence. They distinguish not existence from non-existence and entity from non-entity" 87

Why Spirit Comes into Matter. In the opening lines of the *Risālā Hak Numa* Dārā Shikuh discusses some of the heterodox Sufi views. The first is the theory of the spirit transforming into matter. "Know, O friend," he writes, "that the reason, why the *essence* of man has entered this framework of body, is that the seed of perfection, which lies latent may become patent ; that which is potentiality may reach the actuality and may return enriched with all experiences to its original source. . . . So it is the duty of every individual human being to exert with all his might, to save himself from eternal loss and free himself from duality to join himself with his *source*."⁸⁸

Fana (annihilation) in Sufic phraseology denotes the annihilation of *self* or absorption in God, which is free from self-consciousness. The complete negation of *individual self* is always associated with *Baqa* (subsistence), which means the complete realisation of the Universal Self after the annihilation of individual human will before the will of God. In the *Ṭarikat-ul-Hakikat*, Dārā Shikuh writes : "Know that those who traverse the path of detachment (*tajrīd*) and separation (*tafrīd*), reach their destination by walking steadily on the path of righteousness. Those who have reached the *goal*, have always followed

87. *Ṭarikat-ul-Hakikat*, Opt. Cit. Lahore. Urdu lithograph, p. 18.

88. *Risālā Hak Numa*, p. 1.

this path. Detachment consists in liberation from existence and separation is a milestone in the way leading to non-existence. So long as the *individual self* is predominant, subsistence and annihilation would cling to you, but when you have detached it from your existence, both will vanish. Then union and separation would become alike.”³⁹

The Method of Habs-i-Dam. It seems that Dārā Shikuh at an early age was very much fascinated by the ascetic practices of the Kādīrī discipline and used to practise some of them as a method of “purifying and illuminating the rust settled on the mirror of the heart”, as he terms it. For instance, *Habs-i-dam* or the regulation of the breath, very much akin to the *Prāṇayāma* of the *Yoga* system, was useful to him for “collecting the distracting senses by virtue of concentration of mind attained thereby.” “The method of regulation of breath which has been adopted by this *faqir* (Dārā Shikuh),” he writes, “is such without which success cannot be attained. So every one should practise this method of control of breath. It is done in this way :

‘Sitting in a retired spot, in the posture in which the holy Prophet used to sit, place the elbows of both hands on the two knees ; and with the two thumb-fingers close the holes of the two ears, so that no air may pass out of them. With the two index fingers shut the two eyes, in such a way that the upper eyelid may remain steadily fixed on the lower eyelid, but that the fingers should not press the eye-balls. Place the ring and small fingers on the upper and lower lips, so as to close the mouth. Place the two middle fingers on the two wings of the nose, the right middle finger on the right wing, and the left middle finger on the left wing. Having assumed this posture, firmly close the right nostril with the right middle finger, so that air may not come through it. Now open the left nostril and breathe in slowly, reciting ‘*La illah*’ and drawing the air upto the brain, bring it down to the heart. After this close firmly the left nostril also, with left middle finger, and thus keep the air confined within the body. Then keep the breath confined so long it can be easily done and increase the period of restraining it slowly. After it throw the breath out by opening the right nostril, by removing the middle finger from it. The breath should be thrown out slowly, reciting the words ‘*Il-Allah*’.”⁴⁰

39. *Ibid* p. 25-26.

40. *Risālā Hak Numa* : Panini Office Allahabad. 1912.

After describing the method of *Habs-i-dam*, he recounts its effects :

"This noble practice of retention of breath has been practised by me for some time and I have thereby felt a sensation of light-heartedness and a strange buoyancy of spirits and a great delight and a subtle illumination in the mind and in all my body. All the grossness of languor has often completely vanished and I have felt a great zest and an immeasurable ecstasy."

On the Physical Ascent of the Prophet. As a general rule, when the attractive power of the gross body, owing to its intimate connection with the soul, overpowers it, then the latter becomes gross like the former. But if, on the other hand, the attractive power of the soul brings the gross body under its control, then the latter becomes subtle like the former. Accepting this phenomenon of the etherialisation of the physical body, Dārā Shikuh advances a pseudo-scientific theory for the explanation of the physical ascent of the Prophet, which is regarded as an article of faith among orthodox Muslims, who believe that the Prophet made his journey to heaven in his physical body. He says that the Prophet had such a control over his body, that it became extremely rarified and refined, so much so that no fly ever sat upon it and that it did not cast any shadow upon earth. He further adds that he used to practise *āwurd-burd* or controlling of breath in the cave of *Hira* and as a result of which "his body became subtler than air, more transparent than diamond. Where then is the impossibility that the Prophet in his rarified physical body ascended the seventh heaven?"⁴¹

On Saint-Worship. His reverence for the saints, whom he calls the "chosen souls", is manifest in all his writings. This we propose to deal fully in our notice of the *Safinat-ul-Awliya*, but it would not be out of place to record a few of his impressions here. "This humble writer," he remarks, "always cherished perfect reverence and obedience for this great body of saints. Day and night he had no other thought but to think of them and

41. *Ibid.* p. 10.

considered himself as one of the aspirants to reach them.”⁴² He repeatedly asserts, “Know that next to the prophets of God are the great masters (saints) about whom there is the following verse in the Holy Book : ‘*They are both lovers and beloveds of God.*’ Therefore loving them is loving God, to be near them is to be near Him, to seek them is to seek Him, to unite with them is to unite with Him and showing respect to God.”⁴³

Thereafter he emphasises the necessity of a spiritual guide. This practice of spiritual preceptorship is very common both among the Hindu and Muslim mystics. According to Dārā Shikuh it is necessary for every person that he should seek to attach himself to an “illuminated soul”, who possesses peculiar spiritual gifts and diligence in seeking God. Here he describes his own personal experiences, saying that his mystical yearning after the Union was charged with a deep religious longing to find God and that after much “wanderings” he came under the influence of his spiritual guide, Mullah Shah.

Methods of Divine Communion. Dārā Shikuh lays stress on the value of man’s spiritual attainments and says that his goal is to achieve Divine Communion, which is not mainly dependent upon human efforts but upon the grace of God. There are two paths that lead a man to the Lord—the Path of Grace (*Ṭarīk-i-Faṣḥal*) and the Path of Exertion (*Ṭarīk-i-Mujāhdat*). The former can be achieved through the help of a “perfect divine,” or the spiritual guide. “It is the Grace, when the Lord takes the seeker to a perfect divine,” he observes, “who by his magic touch of spiritual attainments, rouses him from the sleep of worldliness and indifference and without any effort, pain, austerity and penance makes him visualise the Eternal Beloved and thus liberates him from the bonds of egoism and directs him to the stage which the eyes have not seen and the ears have not heard.”⁴⁴

42. *Safinat-ul-Awliya*. MS. referred to in N 1 (fol. 8 a).

43. *Ibid.* fol. 5 b.

44. *Risāla Hak Numa*, p. 2.

The second method is that of exertion and devotional exercise, by which "the novice begins to seek and search, works and toils, resorts to austerity, penance and exertion till the grace of God descends upon him and thus all his labours are crowned with success and he gets the Vision Divine."

But personally he does not believe in the necessity of "self-torture" and remarks that the essence of the All-Good cannot be best realised in the extreme forms of self-mortifications and physical austerities. Hence he says that the fasts and vigils are no good weapons. "My path is of Grace," he observes, "and not of Exertion and I am naturally attracted to God without the performance of physical austerities. . . ." In support of this assertion he ignores the earlier stages of hard discipline and physical renunciation :

"God is not the tormentor but the comforter of His creatures. He has brought thee through this Path, in order to welcome thee as a *guest* and not to punish thee as a *criminal*."

Similarly he says that it is possible for a man engaged in outward worldly pursuits to follow the Path : "One can be in solitude in the midst of crowd and can be in retirement in the very midst of bustle and worldly noise." The use of the patched cloak for a Sufi novice is considered essential by men of the Path but he says that it is useless to assume the form of a *fakir* without the acquisition of the attributes of a true *fakir*. He writes in the *Safinat-ul-Awliya* :

"Worldliness is non-remembering of God. It does not consist either in dress or money or having wife and children."⁴⁵

His Superstitions. We have already referred to his reverence for the saints of all orders. In his biographical works numerous miracles of the saints are recorded. For full details of these miracles, the reader is referred to the pages of his three works already alluded to. We have enumerated about twentyfive miracles of Mian Mir and Mullah Shah in the notice on their

lives. This clearly throws light on the superstitious reverence of the prince for saints and his implicit faith in their miracles. To give another illustration, we would mention an interesting anecdote recorded by the court-historian Abdul Hamid in the *Pādshahnāma* :

"On one occasion, when singers and jugglers were entertaining the royal assemblies, Shaikh Nazir, who had been invited to court on account of his fame in working miracles, suddenly fell into ecstasy and called for a glass full of water. The Shaikh drank a little and passed the glass to others. Every one who tasted of it declared that it was pure honey. Prince Dārā Shikuh and Kazi Mahammad Islam submitted to His Majesty that in Agra the Shaikh had in their presence once transformed a water-jug and on another occasion, a handkerchief into a pigeon. Further, they added, that the Shaikh had once put into their closed palms a blade of grass, which came out in the shape of a worm"46

His belief in superstitions and miracles was so implicit that he carried from Lahore, while on his way to Kandhar, a number of pious *ulemas* and Hindu magicians as a supplement to his warlike equipments. A Hindu *sanyasi* was employed by the prince to work a miracle in the expedition ; and a *Haji*, a master of forty genii, who claimed to be a great magician and hypnotist, was entrusted to secure the reduction of Kandhar by prayers and magic.⁴⁷

Another aspect of his superstitious nature is to be noted in his dreams. Dārā Shikuh believed in, what he himself calls, "the somewhat mysterious significance of dreams." About a dozen of his dreams are to be found in his works. The interpretation of some of them is quite interesting to know. From two of his dreams he received divine injunction to compile two of his most important works. Divine inspiration prompted him to write the *Risālā Hak Nūma*. One of his dreams which we

46. *Vide*. Bib. Ind. p. 887.

47. These anecdotes are given in the *Lataif-ul-Akhhâr*, an anonymous account of the third siege of Kandhar. It is a diary of events from the beginning to the end of the siege. It contains besides military details many camp gossips. See also Dr. Rieu's notice on the *Tarikh-i-Kandhar*. Cat. Vol. I p. 265, and Dr. Kanungo's *Dārā Shikuh* Vol. I.

would like here to record, is very interesting. Herein he describes the circumstances which led to the translation of the *Yoga Vasishtha* into Persian. In his preface to the Persian translation of the above work, the writer says that he received the following order from Dārā Shikuh :

“Since the translations of this sacred book which are extant have not proved of much use to the seekers of the Truth, it is my desire that a re-translation should be undertaken in conference with learned men of all sects who are conversant with the text.

“My chief reason for this noble command is that although I had profited by perusing a translation of it ascribed to Shaikh Sufi, yet once two saintly persons appeared in my dreams ; one of whom was tall, whose hair was grey, the other short and without any hair. The former was Vasishtha and the latter Ram Chandra and as I had read the translation already alluded to, I was naturally attracted towards them and paid my respects. Vasishtha was very kind to me and patted me on the back and addressing Ram Chandra told him that I was brother to him because both he and I were seekers after truth. He asked Ram Chandra to embrace me which he did in the exuberance of love. Thereupon Vasishtha gave some sweets to Ram Chandra which I took and ate.

“After this a desire to cause a re-translation of the book was intensified in me.”⁴⁸

(*To be continued*)

48. MS. of the *Yoga Vasishtha* preserved in the Panjab Public Library, fol. 4. a. b.

INDIAN FEDERATION

A critical study

Khagendranath Bhattacharyya

At the time when the Indian Princes were asked in the Round Table Conference in London to join Indian Federation, the Princes made it clear that before they entered Federation their rights and position must be clearly stated. They wanted to know whether they stood on "terra firma" or they were standing on what the Maharaja of Bikanir called "the shifting sands of expediency." The position of the Princes, throughout the whole course of the eighteenth century, had become so anomalous that their misgivings over their present rights and position could not but be genuine. They claimed, and perhaps rightly, that the question of paramountcy should be satisfactorily solved before the problem of Federation was discussed.

With the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, that important chapter on the constitutional relationship between the Indian Princes and the Crown seems now to have been finally written down. It admits of no dispute that the Indian Princes do not possess sovereignty. Sovereignty, being indivisible, can not be held in common both by the Princes and the Crown. Sovereignty is fully vested in the latter. The legal position of the Princes in relation to the Crown is thus quite simple. The Princes are fully subordinate to the paramount power, and the legal aspect of this subordinate position is fundamentally the same as that of the Indian Provinces in relation to the British authority.

But though the character of their subordinate position is fundamentally the same, yet the way in which the supreme authority of the British power is exercised in these two sets of Indian polities is, however, very different. But this difference in

the way of exercising the sovereign authority only indicates that these two sets of Indian polities are for administrative purpose differently governed. The difference in the system of administration prevailing in the native states and in the provinces is only a difference in degree, and does not in any way alter the fundamental character of the British authority that it is equally supreme in both the states and the provinces.

The provinces are governed through some Constitutional channels which are subject to law. The laws governing the provinces are plain and direct, and the system of the government prevailing in British India is therefore easily understood. But in the Indian States the authority of the Crown is exerted by "executive processes which in large part operate in concealment." It is this concealment of the process of exercise of the Crown's authority that often creates confusion in making a correct estimate of the states' Constitutional position in relation to the Crown. The relation between the states and the Crown is guided by treaties and agreements which operate in concealment, whereas the relation between the provinces and the British authority is regulated by laws which are plain and direct. Just as laws are simply obligations of a self-imposed character to limit the authority of the British power in governing the provinces, so also those treaties and *Sanads* are no more binding on the sovereign power than mere self-imposed obligations to guide and determine the conduct of the Crown in relation to the states. And just as there can be no law which cannot be repealed, so also there is no treaty and *Sanad* which, when necessity arises, cannot be ignored by the sovereign power. Laws are endured by the sovereign authority because of expediency, and treaties are formally respected as a matter of pure courtesy.

It should, however, be made clear that this constitutional position of the Indian States, as stated above, is a process of growth and the final result of historical evolution. So long as this process of growth was not complete the constitutional position of the Indian States could not naturally be correctly stated.

This explains the bewildering mass of conflicting literature that one comes across in studying this complicated problem of the constitutional position of the Indian States. Treaties and agreements were couched in a language that seemed to suggest that the Princes and the Crown were as if of equal status. The study of those documents might lead a lay mind to believe that the Indian States were really proud possessors of sovereign authority. And with those treaty documents in their possession, the Indian Princes also sometimes genuinely believe that their position is as if one of equality of status with that of the Crown. But the final fact remains that as the East India Company consolidated its position in India, that policy of non-intervention which the Company adopted towards the close of the eighteenth century ended by the first quarter of the nineteenth century into the policy of annexation and subordinate isolation. The policy of annexation which began with Auckland, and was continued by Ellenborough, found its most avowed champion in Lord Dalhousie. When the policy of annexation was completely successful, the Crown for its own reason adopted towards the end of the last century the policy of what is known as subordinate union, and definitely relegated the position of the states to one of subordinate co-operation in relation to the authority of the Crown. The supremacy of the authority of the Crown in relation to that of the states was so complete that in 1904 Lord Curzon was able to write : "The sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogatives." His statement caused consternation, but the fact of the statement was undisputably true. The position was further clarified in 1926 when Lord Reading wrote his famous letter to H. E. H. the Nizam and stated that the "Crown's supremacy is not based only upon treaties and engagements but exists independently of them." And in 1928 the Chamber of Princes, in its official memoranda, frankly recognized "that the prerogative of the Crown reached out to any length it chose. . . though in its forbearance it had graciously elected to submit to certain self-

imposed restrictions." And lastly the final touch to this important constitutional question was given by Sir Samuel Hoare in 1935, when, in reply to the complaints of rulers that their powers were being undermined and invaded, he firmly replied that their Highnesses could not question "the nature of their relationship to the King-Emperor. This is a matter which admits of no dispute." "Nothing can be clearer," to quote Varadachariar, "than this assertion of supreme power" and Wajid Khan in his recent book has frankly admitted : "This is a claim not merely to paramountcy but to complete sovereignty over the states."

II.

The position of the Crown in relation to the states is thus one of complete supremacy. In no way can it be described as one of equality of status. But that does not mean that in all matters affecting the states the Crown will always impose its own will on them. The paramount power, in practice, allows itself to be influenced in its decisions by the "wishes, claims and susceptibilities of rulers." In framing the new Constitution for India the Crown took this stand of "accommodating the claims" of the Indian Princes and declared its readiness to recognize the special status of the states. From the very beginning the Crown therefore maintained that the special "wishes, claims and susceptibilities" of the Princes must, as far as possible, find their proper places in the new Government of India Act.

This attitude, *viz.*, to recognize the special claims of the Princes taken up by the Crown was fundamentally wrong in principle. Federal constitutions are framed not on the basis of special claims, but on the basis of common agreements. A Federal Government is not a patchwork of component units to reconcile their conflicting claims, it is a Government based on common will for promoting common welfare. Sir Samuel Hoare's formula that the Federal constitution in India should reconcile the claims of the Crown, the Indian India and the British India was therefore a start from the wrong end of the thing. The discussions

which tended to proceed on the basis of special claims naturally produced some inconsistencies. And these inconsistencies seem to cut at the very root of Federation.

The first great inconsistency in the new Government of India Act is the right of cessation which is to be legally possessed by the states. This is a consequence which the framers of the Act could not logically escape. It followed as a sequel to the Crown's attitude to "accommodate the special claims" of the states. The Princes freely displayed their apprehension that the Parliament might subsequently make amendments in the Constitution that would adversely affect their position. From the speech which the Secretary of State delivered in the House of Commons to allay the apprehension of the Princes, it appears that in any such case the Princes are free, and can legally secede from the Federation. To quote his own words, "If we make such a change in the Bill as to strike at the basis of their Instrument of Accession, then obviously the agreement has been broken between the Princes and Parliament and the Princes are free."

Nothing could be more inconsistent with the notion of Federation than the speech of the Secretary of State quoted above. The second inconsistency in the Act is the large concessions made to the rulers in the administration of Federal laws. In all Federal Governments, the federal authorities utilize the administrative machinery to execute the federal laws of the land. But the Princes argued that it would be a derogation to their sovereignty to allow the Federal authority to exercise power within their states. The Princes' special claim in this matter was fully respected, however inconsistent that claim might have been. But this respect for their special claim produced in the Constitution an anomaly that went against the whole notion of a federal form of Government.

The third anomaly in the Act is the elaborate and cumbersome procedure of the "Instrument of Accession." The adoption of this round-about procedure was also a matter, not of choice, but of sheer logical necessity. It was supposed that the autho-

rity of the Federal Government which was derived from the Parliament could not be made applicable to the states. It is only the Crown which, deriving its powers from the states, could place them at the disposal of the federal authority for exercise over the rulers and their states. But this was only a political fiction, and there was hardly any convincing reason for giving it any legal sanction. In the eye of the paramount power the status of the states does not very much differ from that of the provinces. To quote Varadachariar, "The Instrument of Accession like other so-called treaties would, as between the paramount power and the state concerned, be no more than a guide to political relations whose terms are alterable at the will of the former." And further . . . "It would be open to paramount power, acting for the benefit of all India to require the concurrence of a ruler to any amendment of real importance." If this be the fact that "the terms of Instrument of Accession" are alterable at the will of the paramount power, then there was hardly any justification for devising the 'instrument' itself, and still less so for the assumption that laws passed without the concurrence of any state were inapplicable in the state concerned. The result is that "The Indian Federal System," as Less-Smith has pointed out, "is of a kind hitherto unknown."

III.

If the attitude which the Crown adopted was not satisfactory, the attitude which the Princes adopted was also equally unsatisfactory. In their first flush of enthusiasm the Princes declared themselves to be Indians first, and Princes afterwards, and expressed their readiness to make any sacrifice for forming Greater Federal India. But as the first wave of enthusiasm passed away the spirit of sacrifice on the part of the Princes seemed gradually to tone down. They began to entertain doubts about their rights and position under the Federal system and pressed claims for safeguarding their privileges and special status. When differences began to be accentuated the Maharaja of

Bikanir frankly gave out, "We can not agree to sink into a British Province."

The Indian Princes are extremely conscious of their privileged position, and a thought of voluntarily giving up any of their so-called sovereign rights seems to them to be utterly reprehensible. The intense love of the Princes for titles and decorations and their zeal for leading a life of medieval feudal lords were noticed by Lord Canning who in a characteristically frank letter to Disraeli in 1877 wrote : "Nothing had struck me more in my intercourse thus far with Indian Rajas and Maharajas than the importance they attach to their family pedigrees and ancestral records. . . . Small favours and marks of honour bestowed from time to time are quite as highly prized and appreciated as the more substantial benefits conferred in earlier times by Akbar or Aurangzeb. Fortunately for us they are easily affected by sentiment and susceptible to the use of symbols."

The mentality of a typical Indian Prince could not be more aptly described. If the substance of sovereignty is totally lost, the Princes are more than ever careful to preserve the shadow of what is left to them. Such an attitude is thoroughly inconsistent with the idea of forming a Greater India. There is thus much justification for the popular suspicion that the position of the Princes with their love for autocratic power is really an anomaly in the new Constitution.

Summing up, it would appear that the constitutional position of the Indian States and that of the Provinces in relation to the sovereign authority is fundamentally the same. But in framing the Indian Constitution the point of similarity was not adequately emphasised. On the contrary, the attitude that was taken up in framing the constitution was to emphasise the differences and to perpetuate the differences by giving recognition to the special claims of the Princes. The result was the formulation of a Constitution which was full of some glaring inconsistencies.

REVIEWS

GANDHISM : AN ANALYSIS : By P. Spratt. The Huxley Press,
114, Armenian Street, G. T. Madras. pp. 516. Rupees 2/8.

I believe it is generally held by Socialists that it is not possible to shed our personal bias completely when we try to understand another man's ideas ; and that no really scientific, *i.e.*, completely objective, approach is possible with regard to social phenomena. We do not know how far this is true ; but we may reasonably ask ourselves why we should not be able to describe the life of a man like the course of a river or, say, the growth of a plant or a tree. In such a hypothetically perfect description, facts and opinions ought to have the same value that they had for the subject of our study, neither more nor less. After describing those facts and opinions with the exact amount of emphasis, we ought to be able to say how and why the specific values developed ; and may then even take the liberty of judging them with reference to what we consider valuable in our own view of life. But in no case should our philosophy prejudice or distort a description of the things as they existed in the life or mind of the subject of our scientific enquiry.

If we accept this ideal of biographical or philosophical study, then the present book by Mr. Spratt falls far short of the ideal. It is expressly stated to be "an attempt to discuss Mr. Gandhi's life and work. . . . from a point-of-view which can be called qualified Marxism". The book, in our opinion, does not give us an exact description of Gandhiji, far less of Gandhism : but, within certain limitations, it presents the fairest view that has so far appeared from the Left about the man who still holds a unique place in India's leadership.

The merits of the book will be apparent from the perfectly fair manner in which Mr. Spratt discusses Gandhiji's espousal of the Khilafat Cause (p. 250), the Bardoli Decision (p. 352) or even the *Charkha* in so far as it is a supplementary industry. (p. 303, 307) He takes great pains to understand the steps taken by Gandhiji in relation to the existing circumstances, and approves of them in contrast to the majority of the Left. But we sometimes come across a faint touch of vehemence in connection with these justifications. The author himself admits that he has "very possibly put on too much white", where it is usual to put in black ; but we may ask him if that was at all necessary. Enthusiasm is not very helpful to the

scientific spirit, whether it is with regard to something that we approve or do not approve.

As an illustration of the author's fair deal, we may quote his description of *Satyagraha*, his account being one to which Gandhiji himself will perhaps readily subscribe :

"*Satyagraha* tries to introduce into politics the morality and politeness of private life ; and is conceived—whatever it may be in reality—as an action, not of a mass, but of a collection of individuals. It cultivates a mentality of resistance, but its resistance is not of the mass emotional type, which can be weakened by any distraction. It is rational, and based on enduring sentiments of self-respect and love for the opponent so that it should be in no way weakened by attempts at compromise." (p. 443)

Or let us take the case of the Khilafat, with regard to which the author says :

"In the circumstances participation in the Khilafat Movement probably was the best tactics. It was in part a disguised communal movement, intended to keep the newly awakened masses of the Muslim community, under the control of their religious leaders. Indifference on the part of the Hindus would not have diminished its strength, and would have rendered it more communal. The best way to check a possibly disastrous development of Muslim fanaticism was to join in the Movement oneself, and this Mr. Gandhi almost alone among the Congress leaders had the wisdom to understand from the beginning". (p. 250).

But the merits of the book should not blind us to its defects. There are certain matters, which are not often unimportant, in which Mr. Spratt's own ideas seem to have led him astray. Emphasis appears at the wrong point ; or, as has happened more than once, no emphasis has been laid on facts or opinions which are of supreme importance to Gandhiji himself. Thus, in the whole book, there is no discussion of what Gandhiji terms as *bread-labour* after Tolstoy. In his writings from about 1933 onwards, he has been putting special emphasis on sacrificial labour as one of the supreme ideals to be followed in life. His *charkha* or *khadi* is not a symbol of "benevolence or charity", but is a symbol of the ideal that every man is duty-bound to earn his bread by manual labour alone ; and that no man, whether an intellectual or a soldier, has the right to disobey this law. He can only do so at the expense of human equality and of human happiness. Such an emphasis in Gandhiji's ideology has not been duly appreciated by

Mr. Spratt ; and he has, accordingly, had to confess in the end that "Mr. Gandhi's attachment to the *charkha* remains so far unexplained". (p. 306)

Mr. Spratt thinks that Gandhiji,

"aims at a civilisation which shall reject at least a large part of mankind's achievements, our conquest of Nature and our knowledge". (p. 166)

One should not however forget that Gandhiji does not *aim at* such an objective ; his purpose is to establish the reign of love and unity among men, and in that effort, rejection of certain things in modern civilization takes place as a bye-product. The distinction is fundamental ; and should, on no account, be overlooked. In order to correct the current wrong impression which finds expression in Mr. Spratt's book, Gandhiji once said,

"I have no quarrel with steamships and telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is to destroy industrialism at any cost". (*Young India*, 7. 10. 26.)

Love, in Gandhiji's ideology, has been taken to mean "active benevolence or charity" (p. 164) ; and it has been stated by the author that Gandhiji considers "the existence of rich and poor as a necessary and permanent thing" (p. 216). Gandhiji has indeed said that differences between human beings, even in the matter of income, will perhaps remain till the end of time (*Young India*, 7. 10. 26. 26. 11. 31.) ; but he has never held it to be a desirable thing. For him it is a concession to human weakness : and within comparatively recent times, he has been saying that he is prepared for social ownership whenever private ownership clearly becomes dangerous to human welfare. (*Modern Review*, October, 1935 : An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi). As long ago as 1927, he said,

"My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution." (*Young India*, 17. 3. 27.)

He has also stated that,

"The principle of non-possession necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form."

"You have said that non-violence automatically solves unemployment. You are right, for it rules out exploitation." (*Harijan*, 21. 5. 38.)

"Theoretically, when there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession." (*Modern Review*, Ibid.)

Thus, Mr. Spratt is evidently wrong when he concludes that ;

"Non-violence combines well with the ideal of the self-sufficing individual, with free competition, individual liberty and equality of opportunity." (p. 163.)

It is with regard to the question of Labour and on the State that our author departs most widely from Gandhiji's own views on the subject.

Mr. Spratt says that

"If India were economically independent, he thought, it would be a matter of minor importance who governed the country". (p. 283)

Again that Gandhiji favours

"a monarchical form of government, of course purged of inequality and oppression. The peasants however want above all a ruler who does not interfere in their affairs, and Mr. Gandhi sympathises. That government is best which governs the least, he has said". (p. 221)

But Mr. Spratt overlooks the fact that Gandhiji never wishes even this minimum government to be by an outsider, it should be pure self-rule. In Gandhiji's own words :

"Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life." (*Young India*, 6. 8. 25.)

"By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by *manual labour* (Italics ours) to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses into a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." (*ibid.* 29. 1. 25.)

"Mere withdrawal of the English is not Independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his

own destiny, he is his own legislator through his chosen representative." (*ibid.* 13. 2. 30.)

It is because Mr. Spratt has thus underestimated certain aspects of Gandhiji's idealism that he has ultimately reached a conclusion which does not square with the facts. In the last analysis, he says,

"Mr. Gandhi, in spite of all his obscurantism, is best set down as a bourgeois thinker. He will tend to give others that cool, calculating, open-minded attitude which he himself usually displays, which is generally necessary for a man who is to make his way in the world, and for a society which is to achieve economic success". (p. 186)

"He is, and always has been, a leader of the bourgeoisie in the broadest sense, his ideas are theirs, idealised". (p. 481).

"He is above all a preacher and practiser in a mediaeval society of what I have called the bourgeois virtues. I believe this to be the clearest view which can be taken of his work, and the most useful for an estimate of its results, immediate and more remote. He can also be considered as attempting a religious synthesis of Europe and India : he is a Christianised Hindu". (p. 129)

"His ethics can best be regarded as that of the insurgent bourgeois striving to free himself from mediaeval encumbrances". (p. xi)

We do not, however, suppose that the bourgeoisie would, even in their best moments, consider bread-labour or non-possession to be part of their ideal : or subscribe to Gandhiji's view that in a free India, the interest of the masses, as opposed to that of the classes, should reign supreme.

"It is the masses who have to attain Swaraj. It is neither the sole concern of the monied men nor that of the educated class. Both must subserve their interest in any scheme of Swaraj." (*Young India*, 20. 4. 21.)

"The Congress must, therefore, truly represent the poor. But that does not mean that all other classes—the middle classes, the capitalist or zamindar—must go under. All that it aims at is that all other classes must subserve the interest of the poor." (*Ibid.* 16. 4. 31.)

"I will therefore state the purpose. It is complete freedom from alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb millions. Every interest, therefore, that is hostile to their interest, must be revised, or must subside if it is not capable of revision." (*Ibid.* 17. 9. 31.)

In reply to a letter from Pandit Jawaharlal, he wrote :

"We must not sacrifice the interests of the masses to the capitalists." (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3. 8. 1934.)

So far as his economics ethics is concerned, he said as early as 1916 :

"I venture to suggest that it is a fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality, so long we are thieving." (16. 2. 1916.)

Gandhiji's ideas regarding confiscation of property have undergone some amount of change since 1916 : he now favours it with certain qualifications. But there is no evidence to suggest that he has revised the above view in course of the last twenty-four years. Such views can surely not be those of the bourgeoisie anywhere in the world ; they would all be declassed and become converted into labourers if they tried to live according to that ideal.

In our opinion, therefore, the author of the present book has failed to appreciate the true character of Gandhism on account of his personal bias. Perhaps we never succeed in reducing ourselves to zero ; but that should be no reason why we should not try to reduce it to the minimum. Mr. Spratt states clearly that he has tried "to assimilate his point-of-view to Mr. Gandhi's with a view to understand him" ; and this is why he has been led wrong. The artist, Nandalal Bose, once said to one of his students, "If you wish to draw a camel, you must be a camel." We can also turn it and say, "If we wish to portray Gandhiji in his true colours, we must be one with him, for the time being, both intellectually, and, if possible, emotionally."

Nirmal Kumar Bose.

THE DYNASTS AND THE POST-WAR AGE IN POETRY:—

Amiya Chakravarty—Oxford University Press.

THE sub-title of this absorbing study of the significance of Hardy's great "epic-drama" in the evolution of modern English poetry is "A study in modern ideas". While recognizing gladly and to the full that the lyric of spontaneous personal emotion, "newly sprung in June", must have its high and assured place in every age of poetry, Dr. Chakravarty is convinced that a "poetry of comprehensive consciousness" is growing up alongside it, which is in each succeeding age connected at bottom with the developing picture of the cosmos built up by research and thought. "The dominant problem

in modern poetry", he writes, "is the problem of self-consciousness", especially in the relationship of sensitive, struggling man to the blind, indifferent universe in which he is placed. No dualistic system of philosophy will finally satisfy us moderns ; we need some way of thought that enables us to view our world as integral in spite of its conflicts. Nor are we quite able, suggests the author, to accept evil as Browning did, as a necessary element in the schooling of character ; we suspect that to do so might ultimately dull our enthusiasm for fighting it. Dr. Chakravarty commends "The Dynasts" to our attention as a poem which superlatively illumines the mind of our age by its imaginative grasp of the universe in which that mind moves, and whose power and suggestiveness is the greater because of its avoidance of any facile or didactic solution of our problem.

This being the author's purpose, we shall not expect to find in this book any detailed study of what may be called the technique of Hardy's poem. There are, indeed, suggestive references in abundance to its dramatic power, its character-drawing, the high quality of its allegory, the peculiar, stirring intensity of a phrase here, a line there in which the apparently trivial reveals as in a lightning flash the cosmic nature of the drama. There are references to Hardy's life-long interest in the history of the Napoleonic period, there are thought-provoking comparisons with *Piers Plowman*, Shakespeare and Wordsworth. One can well imagine that any of these may send some student with awakened interest to pursue the topic further. But such matters of literary or historical interest are deliberately treated as secondary to a study of the philosophical implications of the poem and the influence of its thought upon subsequent writers.

The book is divided into two sections, and two important appendices work out more fully positions taken up in the body of the work. The first part consists of a detailed study of the movement of thought in "The Dynasts" itself. "With Hardy", we read, "the idea of the Unconscious enters modern poetry." Hardy sees the developing struggle between the conscious and the unconscious Will in man, and finds our greatest tragedy in the fact that those who think they control and direct nature are very often themselves the mere tools of the "blind Will", and what they, like Napoleon, achieve is the sacrifice of the human consciousness, in bitter suffering, to those uncontrolled subterranean forces. The chorus of Spirits represents the different aspects of the human mind—the Spirit Sinister allied in some way with the cosmic unconscious ; the Spirit of the Years, the power to record rationally and objectively the facts as they occur : the Spirit of Irony, the honest-mindedness which recognizes the existence and validity of different points-of-view and will accept no solution in which they cannot be fully reconciled ; the

Pities, the "youngest spirits", the newly emergent sensitiveness which asks why the agony of existence is forced upon sentient beings at all—

"Why make life debtor when it did not buy?"

In this psychological approach, in the feeling that the problem of humanity is less that of the right use of its material resources, than the understanding of the relationship of its sensitive self-consciousness to the Unconscious Will within no less than around it, Hardy is a modern of the moderns, and the application of this aspect of his thought is seen in our post-war poetry.

This first book is called "The Process in Poetry". This idea of a Process informing the universe Dr. Chakravarty finds to be fundamental to Hardy's poetical conception. He has accepted and assimilated the idea of evolution and makes the evolution of consciousness the basis of morality. The universe is in process of evolving into consciousness, and man, the imperfect, groping first-fruits of that evolution, cries out against the not-yet-sensitive unconscious nature from which he has sprung. Yet the drama shows that as the Napoleonic wars involve more and more of Europe, the non-human with the human, in a senseless nightmare of suffering, the Pities reach and hold more and more strongly to the faith that the Process is making for good, and that as consciousness grows to inform the whole Will that moves the cosmos, It will "fashion all things fair";

"Nay, shall not Its blindness break ?

Yea, must not Its heart awake,

Promptly tending

To Its mending

To a genial germinating purpose, and for loving-kindness' sake ?...

Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all things fair !"

The idea of the developing consciousness of nature is new in poetry with Hardy and is of great importance to the understanding of the modern poet's struggle for an integration of experience. And "South Riding", which is interestingly referred to, is only one of many modern novels which in slight or serious mood reflect the same conception.

The second part of the book is occupied in tracing the influence of Hardy's creative thought upon the development of modern poetry. Its preoccupation with the evolution of life in all its aspects, and its self-conscious, analytical approach to experience (crude, morbid and deadening in some of its extreme manifestations) both owe their prime impulse to him. A suggestive treatment of the work of the nineties, which is carried further in an appendix, should help to correct certain misconceptions of that tumultuously alive era. "The Dynasts" influence on serious poetic drama is examined in connection with Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" and Auden's "The Dog

beneath the Skin". The dominant psychological interest, the feeling for a larger unity than that of mankind alone, the terrors of our war-haunted, dictator-ruled world, and the harking back of Eliot's mind to what is really a dualistic and so unsatisfactory solution of the modern problem, are all penetratingly displayed.

Written by a man of sensitive modern spirit, there are some aspects of the thought of this book which will strike the reader with a poignant immediacy. It recurs again and again to the brutal futility of war, which in "The Dynasts" is made the symbol and channel of human suffering. War can no longer be tolerated as it once was in poetry as a part of inscrutable destiny or "necessary evil"; mankind is moving to a higher level of consciousness, and "the whole problem of poetry and war provides a standard for testing the susceptibilities of an age." Dr. Chakravarty devotes his second appendix to a discussion of "Hardy and war-poetry" from this point-of-view, in which Hardy stands out as the first poetic critic of war as a preventible social breakdown, not a cataclysm of Nature. Linked with this is the psychological approach to the mushroom Napoleons of our own day and those who follow them.

It would probably have been helpful to many readers who will desire to pursue some of the paths to which the book invites, if the many references to sources, etc., which enrich the footnotes could have been gathered together in some form of bibliography. In places, too, the expression of thought seems unnecessarily obscure. But these are small points, and we are indebted to Dr. Chakravarty for an original and convincingly presented study of the "first of the moderns" which, one hopes, will lead its readers to a renewed and enlightened study of Thomas Hardy's achievement.

Marjorie Sykes.

*THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDE OF EARLY BUDDHIST
PHILOSOPHY: By Anangarika B. Govind (The Law
Journal Press, Allahabad.)*

THE book embodies the Readership Lectures delivered by the author at the Patna University in the year 1936-37, with an Appendix divided into seven sections, devoted to further explanation of certain technical terms used in the course of the treatment of the different subjects dealt with in the body of the work, and clearer elucidation of the concepts used therein. The aim of the author appears to have been to present a systematic exposition of the intricate topics of Buddhistic philosophy and psychology as are treated of elaborately, and somewhat dispersely, in the different books comprising the

traditional *Abhidharma Pitaka*. An attempt of the kind was no doubt made in early days by Thera Anuruddha in his Pali *Abhidhammattha Samgataa* (*Abhidharmartha Samgraha*), But the treatment there is so concise and full of intricate details without any elaboration and illustration, that it is difficult to have a systematic comprehension of the topics taken up in the treatment. The present author appears to have removed that difficulty by his clear and systematic exposition of the subjects dispersed in the books of *Abhidharma* in general and concisely brought together in the work of Anuruddha. In doing this, the author must be credited to have removed a felt want of students of Buddhistic psychology, and also of its philosophy. A true comprehension of the philosophy of Buddhism needs a clear and critical understanding of the psychological basis of the system, for this philosophy can have no standing without the thoroughly analytical psychological doctrines on which it is built up. For a student of Western psychology, however, these doctrines will appear to be somewhat crude and quaint at places, and unnecessarily prolix. But to get a true insight into the position appearing so foreign to one used to Western modes of handling the mental life, one has to approach the treatment with a necessary intellectual sympathy. One has to disabuse his mind, first of all, of the usual idea that what is ordinarily called the mental life runs on one level alone. As a matter of fact, it has many levels, as testified to by the spiritual experiences of mystics and, for the matter of that of those who are inwardly devoted to a true religious life. Buddhism, in its aims and objects, is strictly a spiritual philosophy ; and so its treatment of this inner life in its stages of spiritual development is approached with a peculiarly different method as justified by the nature of the subject and founded on actual experiences of the deeper levels by those who have lived with earnest devotion the higher life. This has been particularly stressed by the author throughout his exposition of the subjects coming under treatment in the work under review.

This is the general impression a reader of the work is expected to carry in his mind. But a critical student of the subject will find it difficult to follow the author in his apologetic discussions, here and there, which appear to be almost 'scholastic' in his standpoint and method. And this aspect of the writing the author could have advisedly avoided without any detriment to the worth of the work undertaken. The treatment evinces no doubt his wide studies in the literature of Pali Buddhism (for which he would rather substitute the term "Early Buddhism") and deep understanding of the position, both in its theoretical and practical aspects. But still it cannot be asserted that he has been very clear and correct in his exposition at all

places. Something is left obscure here and there, and the interpretation he has offered of certain Pali terms and texts may be questioned by scholars of the subject, who have more thoroughly studied it from the original sources, and by the eminent commentators thereon. This aspect of the treatment cannot, however, be absolutely pronounced as a defect of the work, which appears to have been thoroughly and honestly carried out so far as the topics undertaken are concerned. It is ably done on the whole. What impresses a sympathetic reader of the book is the earnestness devoted to the execution, and the spirit of sincere faith displayed throughout. It appears from the mode of exposition that he has realised himself the trend of thought, not simply intellectually but practically, in his life. And this is a feature never to be overlooked in a writing of the religious sort.

One other special feature of the work is the graphic illustration of some of the intricate topics of Buddhist psychology and philosophy as expounded in the *Abhidharma*, both in its original texts and later treatises based on them. This is what was expected of a writer who is a well-known artist himself. How far this mode of representation of the ideas underlying the topics treated will be helpful for their right and clear understanding is left to the judgment of the readers of the work.

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